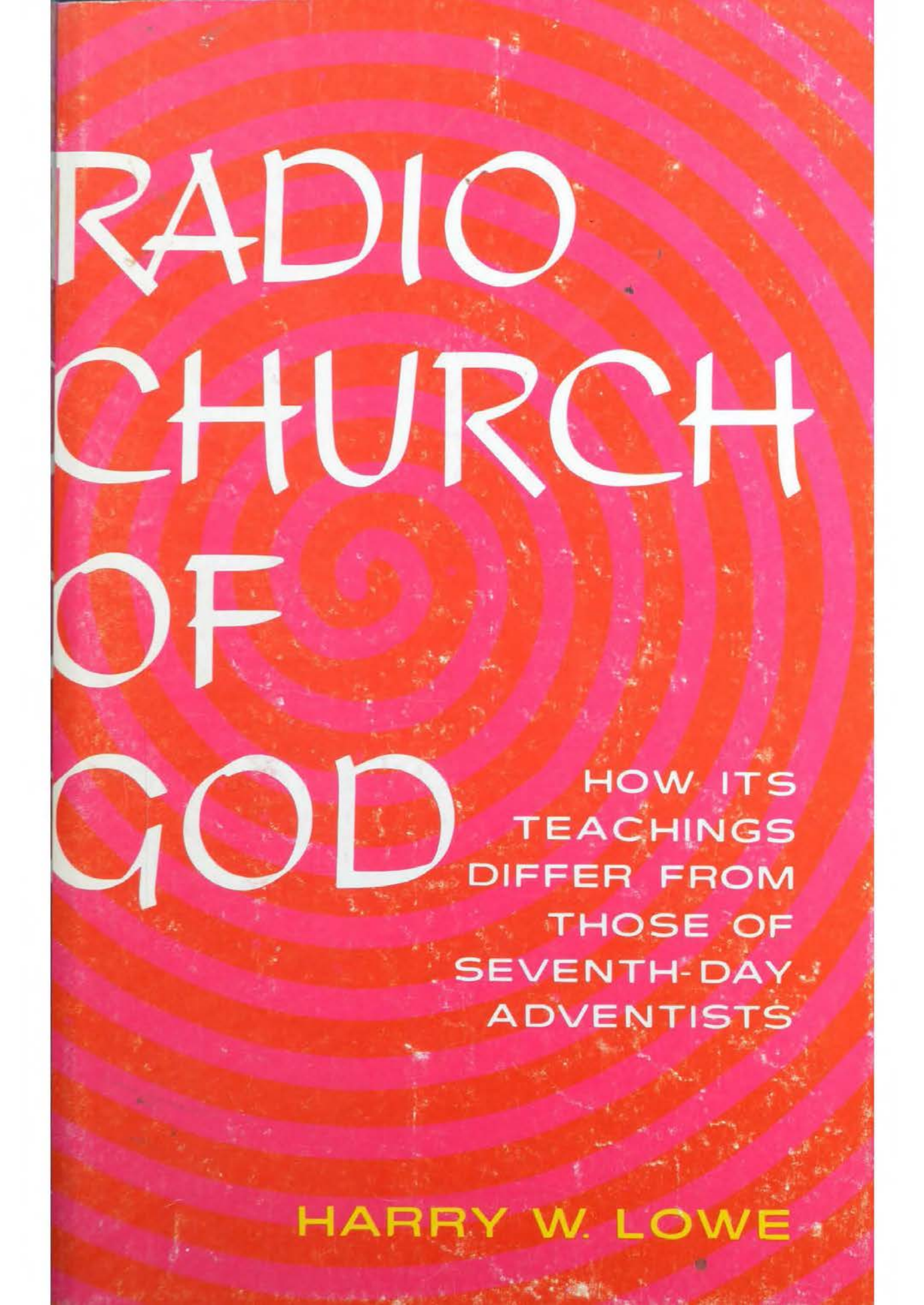




RADIO CHURCH OF GOD

HOW ITS
TEACHINGS
DIFFER FROM
THOSE OF
SEVENTH-DAY
ADVENTISTS

HARRY W. LOWE

RADIO CHURCH OF GOD

**How Its Teachings Differ From
Those of Seventh-day Adventists**

RADIO CHURCH OF GOD

**How Its Teachings Differ From
Those of Seventh-day Adventists**

by Harry W. Lowe

Author of:

Handbook for Sabbath School Teachers

Speaking in Tongues

Redeeming Grace

Pacific Press Publishing Association

Mountain View, California

Omaha, Nebraska

Oshawa, Ontario

Copyright © 1970, by
Pacific Press Publishing Association
Litho in the United States of America
All rights reserved

Library of Congress Catalog Card No. 77-101250

FOREWORD

A difficulty encountered in studying the teachings of H. W. Armstrong's Radio Church of God is that no compilation of them exists. The inquirer is informed of this fact and told that his name will be placed on the list to receive the free monthly journal, *The Plain Truth*. Each issue of this attractive periodical contains only a little doctrinal teaching. Consequently the reader gets the teachings in small doses, a plan apparently in keeping with the organization's belief in advancing truth. "In fact," says Roderick C. Meredith, "very seldom has *even* ONE year gone by without God revealing some *new* truth of MAJOR significance to those of us in this ministry! Many of you who have read The PLAIN TRUTH for a few years will *know* what I mean."—*The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast*, page 17.

After a time the reader enrolls in the Bible correspondence course, which prolongs the process. Throughout their literature, pamphlet titles are mentioned as available on request—each one giving a little more information on some of the teachings. Thus it takes a period of time to accumulate even a fairly complete picture of Radio Church of God teachings.

Seeking to be fair in stating the teachings of the Radio Church of God, we have taken our information from their own publications and not from those of opponents.

Although Mr. H. W. Armstrong believes that the true New Testament church is referred to as "The Church of God" in the Bible, his organization uses the name "Ambassador College" more frequently. This is done because, as

outlined in a circular letter of November 21, 1966 (sent to all readers of *The Plain Truth*), educational work can enter some countries where religious interests cannot. So the one name claimed for the true church, though not always prominent, remains organizationally behind the Ambassador College.

Ambassador College, sponsors of the extensive *World Tomorrow* broadcast, which claims to reach 25 million people, and the monthly magazine, *The Plain Truth*, with a circulation of one and a quarter million in 1968, represents a growing movement claiming to be God's one true church.

This book does not pretend to cover all Radio Church of God teaching, partly because the group teaches that truth keeps coming all the time through its literature, and also because we intend to concentrate mainly on major teachings. Many of the teachings we shall examine in some detail; others we shall pass over with a simple statement, endeavoring always to do this in a kindly spirit.

It would be too much to expect that this book will answer every question. But we have searched through a great deal of relevant literature in an effort to digest it for our readers, in whose hands we now leave this study under God's guidance.

H. W. L.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. A Church Name, How Meaningful? 9
2. Biographical Backgrounds 17
3. Teachings Related to Salvation 27
4. The Coming Kingdom of God 42
5. The Millennium and End of Evil 54
6. Teachings Concerning the Godhead 67
7. Anglo-American-Israel Theory 78
8. Anglo-Israelism (Continued) 88
9. The Crucifixion and Resurrection 97
10. Some Other Teachings, Part 1 112
11. Some Other Teachings, Part 2 122
12. Miscellaneous Teachings 133

I.

A Church Name, How Meaningful?

Does the New Testament give the church a specific name? Which matters more—a church name or the truth of its doctrines?

The True Church of Jesus Christ

The four Gospels portray different aspects of the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. In them we find firsthand information on everything that Christ intended His church to know. If He instructed it to assume any special name, we should find it here.

Three times in the Gospel of Matthew we find the Greek word *ekklēsia*, translated “church” and meaning *called out* (from *ek*, meaning “out” and *kaleō*, meaning “to call”):

“And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.” Matthew 16:18.

“And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell it unto the church: but if he neglect to hear the church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.” Matthew 18:17.

No one would seriously contend that, by using the terms “the church” twice and “my church” once in these two verses, our Lord endeavored to set forth any specific proper name for His church that had been “called out” from the world. Likewise nothing else in the Gospels indicates a specific name.

We find reference to "the church" more than sixty times in the New Testament; and each time it refers in general to a group of believers, *e.g.*, "the church which is at Cenchrea" (Romans 16:1); "the church that is in their house"; "the churches of Asia" (1 Corinthians 16:19); "the church in the wilderness" (Acts 7:38); *et cetera*.

There are eight references to "the church of God": Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 10:32; 11:22; 15:9; 2 Corinthians 1:1; Galatians 1:13; 1 Timothy 3:5. Five of these refer to local churches in Ephesus and Corinth, and three to believers in general. None of them gives a specific name for the church as a whole. The name "church" is not found in the Old Testament.

Altogether we find in the New Testament (King James Version) one hundred twelve appearances of the words "church" and "churches." In addition to those already cited, other typical examples are:

"The *churches of Christ* salute you." Romans 16:16.

"As in all the *churches of the saints*." 1 Corinthians 14:33.

And incidentally, *ekklesiā* is translated as "assembly" three times.

Other ways of designating the believers include such expressions as these:

"Believed not, but spake evil of *that way*." Acts 19:9.

"And the same time there arose no small stir about *that way*." Acts 19:23.

The most commonly used Biblical term in this connection is "brethren." In the New Testament alone it is used 346 times, sometimes for literal kin, sometimes figuratively, and often of church members. Jesus used this word in significant ways, and New Testament writers attribute its use to Him:

"But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My mother? and who are My *brethren*? And He stretched forth His hand toward His disciples, and said, Behold My mother and My *brethren*!" Matthew 12:48, 49.

"All ye are *brethren*." Matthew 23:8.

"Go tell My *brethren*." Matthew 28:10.

"He is not ashamed to call them *brethren*." Hebrews 2:11.

"It behooved Him to be made like unto His *brethren*." Hebrews 2:17.

Paul customarily referred to believers as "the brethren." This term appears often in the New Testament and in every book except Titus, 1 Peter, Philemon, 2 John, and Jude. If frequency of reference means anything, then this name suggests itself as a common New Testament designation for believers. From these usages just discussed and other similar references arise such names as "Church of the Brethren," "The Brethren," "Plymouth Brethren," "Church(es) of Christ," "The Christian Church," "Latter Day Saints," "The Church of God," and others.

In view of this Biblical evidence, it seems clear that the New Testament endorses no explicit name for the corporate body of believers. Neither Christ nor the disciples, not even John, the last of the apostles, ever clearly announced one. Obviously the teaching, rather than the name, stood out as important.

Our Lord built His church upon Himself (Matthew 16:18), and the apostle Paul confirms this point: "For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ." 1 Corinthians 3:11.

The supreme requirement for membership in the New Testament fellowship of believers was belief in Jesus Christ as the Saviour from sin:

"Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 2:38; cf. 4:10-12; 5:30, 31.

A Personal Relationship, and a Name

A right relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ is what united members to His true church, not merely formal

membership in a group bearing a name based on a phrase found in the New Testament. It was in Christ's name that the miraculous events of the New Testament took place, as seen in Acts 4:10: "Be it known unto you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead, even by Him doth this man stand here before you whole."

Salvation comes through faith in the blessed name and work of Jesus, not in the use of a certain church name: "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Acts 4:12.

The newly converted Saul spent a few days with the disciples at Damascus, and then immediately began his ministry, centering attention on the most important name in the Christian vocabulary: "And straightway he preached Christ in the synagogues." Acts 9:20.

Further evidence that the company of believers was known, not by an organizational name, but by the Lord's name, is seen in the Jewish congregational response to Paul's preaching: "But all that heard him were amazed, and said; Is not this he that destroyed them which called on *this name* in Jerusalem?" Verse 21; cf. Acts 8:35.

If Christ had chosen a specific name for His church, surely the Holy Spirit would have recorded it unequivocally in the New Testament. The fact remains that the believers were known simply as "Christians" and they referred to themselves as "the church": "And it came to pass, that a whole year they assembled themselves with the church, and taught much people. And the disciples were called Christians first in Antioch." Acts 11:26.

When Festus and King Agrippa listened to Paul's declaration of faith, the trembling Festus called Paul mad with learning, but the challenged Agrippa said, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Acts 26:28. He used the term which had originated some time before in Antioch—a term which continued to be used for believers in Christ.

Peter wrote of their being "reproached for the name of Christ" and argued that suffering as a criminal or busybody should never be known among them; then he added: "Yet if any man suffer as a Christian, let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf." 1 Peter 4:16. "But if anyone suffers as a Christian, he should feel it no disgrace, but confess that name to the honor of God." NEB. "But in that name let him glorify God." New American Standard Bible.

"'Let him glorify God in connection with this name.' . . . The connection is here so clearly apparent in the sufferer who suffers 'as a Christian,' who truly bears this designation which is derived from 'Christ.'"—R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of the Epistles of St. Peter, St. John and St. Jude*, pages 209, 210.

The name of Christ became supremely important among first-century believers. They felt no concern for an organizational name. Not a single argument on the subject appears in the New Testament. Their whole concern centered on preaching Christ and Him crucified.

Is the True Church Identified by Its Name?

Herbert W. Armstrong's *Radio Church of God* writings teach that the true name of the church is given in twelve different texts, and that the number twelve is significant because twelve "is God's *complete* number."¹

They cite five texts of Scripture (Acts 20:28; 1 Corinthians 10:32; 1 Corinthians 11:22; 1 Corinthians 15:9; Galatians 1:13) where the phrase "the church of God" is used.

Then they cite four more texts which refer to local groups as the church of God (1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:5; and verse 15), though the last one of these reads "church of the living God." Finally, they cite three more in which "the churches of God" are mentioned: 1 Corinthians 11:16; 1 Thessalonians 2:14; 2 Thessalonians 1:4.

The reader who checks these references will notice that in the first list we have "the church of God" in general; in the second we have three specifically named local groups of believers, plus one reference to "the church of the living God"; in the third we have "churches" in the plural with no attempt to stress a geographical location. Moreover, we might inquire why these twelve texts are any more significant than others such as the following:

"The churches of Christ salute you." Romans 16:16.

"The churches of the saints." 1 Corinthians 14:33.

"The church of the Firstborn." Hebrews 12:23.

A good concordance will impress the reader with the fact that Bible writers more often than not referred to "the church" or "churches" without adding the phrase "of God" or "of Christ," though in all cases implying it. Therefore the argument that "Church of God" is the only correct Biblical title because of the "evidence" cited hardly sounds convincing. *Twelve* may be a complete number in certain other connections, but here the reasoning hardly seems conclusive.

The name "Church of God" appears often on the pages of church history, being applied also to certain church groups in the United States after the landing of the Pilgrims in 1620. Most of our readers will agree, however, that God's true saints have been scattered through every land, and in every Christian communion, throughout the centuries, regardless of any identifying church name.

In 1664 Stephen Mumford and his wife, members of the Bell Lane Seventh Day Baptist Church, London, England, came to Newport, Rhode Island; and a Seventh Day Baptist church was organized there in 1672. Some thirty other Sabbatarian Baptist churches already existed throughout New England, though not all were named Seventh Day Baptist.² Some of these sprang from seven known Churches of God (Seventh Day) in London, England, at the time of the Puritan migrations to various parts of New England; and these took the name "Church of God,"³ a name

retained by several groups ever since. But Mr. Armstrong will not admit that any group using the name "Church of God," other than his own movement, bears genuine credentials.

After listing the above twelve texts and eliminating other churches known as "Church of God" as counterfeit, the Radio Church of God makes the following claims: "These verses prove the NAME of the true Church. Denominations *not* bearing this name could *not* be God's true church. And of all the churches that do bear the name, *only one* could be the *true* Church of God—that one which OBEYS ALL the commandments of God and maintains the FAITH delivered once for all time—the one which *grows* in truth. All others are counterfeit, even though they may have the knowledge about the true NAME of God's Church."⁴

It is interesting to note that a certain Elder A. N. Dugger, one of the leaders of a group that later broke off from the Stanberry, Missouri, Church of God and formed another "Church of God (Seventh Day)" with headquarters in Salem, West Virginia, used the same argument now being used by Herbert W. Armstrong regarding a church name: "There was a remnant who refused to sanction this name [Seventh-day Adventist] in the place of the Scriptural name, 'Church of God' mentioned just 12 times in the New Testament."⁵

After establishing to his satisfaction, and with much repetition, that his own organization stands as the one true church, Mr. Armstrong justifies the addition of the "radio" to the name "Church of God." In doing this he reasons that the edifying of the church by the ministry is accomplished when the Radio Church of God program is on the air, and the believers are then virtually attending a church service.

And now, besides the transition from "Church of God" to "Radio Church of God," such titles as "World Tomorrow Broadcast" and "Ambassador College" (now widely used for legal and other reasons) are ingeniously made to include the whole organization. Furthermore, the Radio Church

of God identifies Herbert W. Armstrong as God's messenger to all the world in these last days: "In these last days WHEN THE GOSPEL MUST GO AROUND THE WORLD, Jesus chose a man amply trained in the advertising and business fields to shoulder the mission—HERBERT W. ARMSTRONG."⁶

Thus the H. W. Armstrong movement is referred to as "God's Church—the (Radio) Church of God."

Anyone who does any research into the history of seventh-day Sabbath observance, soon realizes that there have been and still are several groups with the same basic ideas on a church name as those taught by the Radio Church of God. For example, in 1896 a Negro cook on the Santa Fe Railroad, claiming to have visions from God, organized a "Church of God"—sometimes called "The Church of God and the Saints of Christ"—and became its first bishop. They observed the seventh-day Sabbath and the annual Jewish feast days, and they still have a center at Belleville, Pennsylvania.

The number of churches and groups claiming to be God's true church has become so large that this fact of itself constitutes a reason why the utmost care should be exercised in comparing such claims with the teachings revealed in the Holy Scriptures.

REFERENCES

1. Herman L. Hoeh, *A True History of the True Church*, page 27.
2. See Virgilius Ferm, *The American Church*, 1953 ed., Philosophical Library, New York, page 199.
3. See Frank S. Mead, *Handbook of Denominations in the U.S.*, 1956, Abingdon Press, New York, page 64.
4. Hoeh, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
5. Statement prepared by A. N. Dugger, General Overseer, Church of God (Salem, W. Va.) for *Census of Religious Bodies*, 1936, on Church of God (Seventh Day). United States Government Printing Office, 1939.
6. Hoeh, *op. cit.*, p. 26.

2.

Biographical Backgrounds

Armstrong Never a Seventh-day Adventist

Repeatedly people ask if Herbert W. Armstrong is, or ever was, a Seventh-day Adventist. Some of his opponents assert that he was. Some Radio Church of God writers deny any kind of contact between Herbert W. Armstrong and Seventh-day Adventists, as for example, the following:

"Incidentally, there was *never* any association in any way, with Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Mormons nor any such sects, as some accusers have falsely claimed."¹

Some publications have erroneously attributed Seventh-day Adventist membership to Mr. Armstrong in his early days. This assumption doubtless arises from his teaching of the seventh-day Sabbath and of certain other views held by Seventh-day Adventists. Mr. Armstrong himself disavows membership at any time in the Seventh-day Adventist Church:

"It seems necessary to add here that I have *never* been a member of the Seventh-day Adventist denomination. False statements have appeared in various church or religious magazines, pamphlets or tracts that I am a former Seventh-day Adventist."²

"Let me now make the truth PLAIN.

"I have never been a member of these so-called 'Jehovah's Witnesses,' nor of the Seventh Day Adventists. I have

never in any manner, shape, nor form, had any remote connection with them, or associated with either sect or denomination. I have never had any fellowship with them.”³

From various statements in the literature of the Radio Church of God, we learn about Mr. Armstrong’s early religious connections. He asserts: “I had been brought up from birth in the Friends Church.”⁴ “I was born of solid old Quaker stock.”⁵ “From earliest memory I was kept regularly in the Sunday school and church services of the First Friends Church.”⁶

In 1917, when Mr. Armstrong was married, his religious opinions began to change. He writes as follows of a change of affiliation in 1920:

“Before our marriage my wife had been quite interested in Bible study. She had been for years an active Methodist.

“After marriage, although she had not lost her interest in the Christian life and the Bible, she had not had the same opportunity to express it, or participate in religious fellowship with others. While we lived in Maywood, suburb of Chicago, we had joined the River Forest Methodist Church, but the fellowship there had been more social than spiritual or Biblical.”⁷

Changing Convictions

Later the Armstrongs lived in Salem, Oregon, and there in 1926 Mrs. Armstrong became acquainted with an elderly neighbor lady, Mrs. Ora Runcorn. From her Mrs. Armstrong learned of the seventh-day Sabbath and began to observe it.

After investigation, Mr. Armstrong followed his wife in keeping the Sabbath. He says, “It was probably May or June, 1927, when I was baptized.”⁸

His baptismal affiliation, however, was not with the Seventh-day Adventist Church, but with, as he puts it, the “almost unknown little Church of God with its small publishing house in Stanberry, Missouri.”⁹

This small group was actually an early offshoot of the

Seventh-day Adventist Church. In 1866 Elders B. F. Snook and W. H. Brinkerhoff apostatized from the Iowa Conference of Seventh-day Adventists and led off a number of people to form this independent group, referred to among Seventh-day Adventists as "the Marion Party" (from Marion, Iowa, their original headquarters). In 1889 they moved to Stanberry, Missouri, where they operated a small publishing house and called their paper *The Bible Advocate*. They used the name "Church of God (Adventist)" for a time, and later became known as "The Church of God (Seventh Day)."

In 1906 this group reported a membership of 354; in 1916, 848. By 1926, the year that Mrs. Armstrong began to keep the Sabbath with them, the figure had risen to 1,686. (See *U.S. Census of Religious Bodies of the U.S.* for 1936, Bulletin 13, p. 32.) The believers lived mainly in scattered rural areas, with no church as large as 100 members.

The Armstrongs may at first have had no knowledge that the Church of God which they joined had broken off from the Seventh-day Adventist Church; but if so, they likely did not remain long in ignorance of the fact that they now fellowshiped with former members of that church.

Shortly Mr. Armstrong began preaching and writing for *The Bible Advocate*, and some of his articles were accepted and used. Then he wrote a sixteen-page article contradicting "a certain minor point of doctrine proclaimed by this church, based on an erroneous interpretation of a certain verse of Scripture," and the editor rejected it. Mr. Armstrong says, "Naturally, this shook my confidence considerably."¹⁰

Troubled Personal Relationships

Some time later Mr. Armstrong wrote a three-hundred-page document to prove that the so-called ten lost tribes of Israel had migrated to northwestern Europe, the British Isles, and later the United States. He maintained that the

British people were the descendants of Ephraim, and Americans the descendants of Manasseh. This, too, was rejected, and the author says, "Truly, this was bewildering."¹¹

But worse was to follow. A minister of the Church of God (Adventist) interviewed Mr. Armstrong in Portland, Oregon, and as a result the editor of *The Bible Advocate* was advised not to publish any further material from this source.

At this time the Armstrongs, according to his account in *The Plain Truth*, were worshipping with a dozen or so persons in a little church in Oregon City, and studying the Sabbath school lesson quarterlies published in the Stanberry publishing house. This group included a Mr. Hobbs, described by Mr. Armstrong as an influential, aggressively keen man past eighty years of age:

"He had received a letter from the editor in Stanberry, Missouri, explaining that my articles were being discontinued at the request of the young minister newly arrived in Oregon. . . ." "This had aroused the fiery indignation of Brother Hobbs. Immediately he sent a scorching letter back to Stanberry, a copy of which he let me read. It resulted in reinstating my articles for publication."¹²

This Mr. Hobbs, according to Mr. Armstrong, "had been an Adventist since a young man—probably beginning somewhere around 1870, or perhaps earlier. Adventists during those earlier years were very strict, legalistic, and exacting. Brother Hobbs had left the Adventists rather late in life when he saw clearly, in the Bible, that the millennium will be spent on earth and not in heaven."¹³

Mr. Armstrong, at the request of the newly organized Oregon Conference of the Church of God, conducted an evangelistic campaign at Harrisburg, Oregon, and was reprimanded because as merely a licensed minister (not ordained) he baptized four converts. He became upset over this treatment.

A former Seventh-day Adventist minister, one Robert L. Taylor, came to Oregon in 1931, and was asked to con-

duct an evangelistic campaign in Eugene, Oregon. He agreed, provided Mr. Armstrong be ordained and made a full-time minister to assist in the campaign. On this incident Mr. Armstrong offers the following comment:

"It was decided by the officers of the conference that on the next all-day meeting I was to be ordained, so I could join Elder Taylor in the campaign in Eugene.

"I shall never forget that moment of my ordination.

"The meeting was being held outdoors. I do not remember where—except it was in the general rural area of Jefferson. I do not remember other circumstances, except that one or two other ministers were there in addition to Elder Taylor."¹⁴

The early issues of *The Plain Truth* for 1960 indicate that Mr. Armstrong soon began to disapprove of the evangelistic methods used by Elder Taylor, and in November, 1931—the year of his ordination—the Oregon Conference dropped Mr. Armstrong from the payroll but retained Mr. Taylor. From this point Mr. Armstrong became a newspaper advertising solicitor for some fifteen months in Astoria, Oregon.

According to *The Plain Truth*, April, 1960, the Oregon Conference of the Church of God early in 1933 invited Mr. Armstrong to take up ministerial work once more, at which time he came into contact with a former Seventh-day Adventist minister, Sven (Sam) Oberg. Mr. Armstrong's new assignment was to work with Mr. Oberg, a man of fifty-three, in an evangelistic campaign in Salem, Oregon. Mr. Armstrong says he regarded Mr. Oberg "with a sort of awe, feeling I had never met a person so perfect and so righteous and so powerful in preaching."¹⁵ This high regard, however, soon evaporated. Indeed, it turned to severe criticism, personal antagonism becoming so strong that a business meeting had to be called to deal with matters.

Very soon the Church of God became rent by disputes over denominational leadership and policies. Mr. Dugger, who had been their editor and president, seceded and took

with him a large section—some reports indicate about one half—of the membership. They set up a new headquarters in Salem, West Virginia, November 4, 1933, and called themselves "The Church of God (Seventh Day)," in contrast with "The Church of God (Adventist)" at Stanberry, Missouri. (Both groups were known later as "Church of God [Seventh Day].") Mr. Armstrong joined Mr. Dugger in this revolt.

When a Seventh-day Adventist author, Robert L. Odom, wrote in 1935 to the two organizations mentioned above, and also to Mr. Armstrong himself, to confirm certain facts, he received the following replies:

From the Church of God, Stanberry, Missouri:

"Mr. Herbert Armstrong is not now a member of the Church of God (Seventh Day). He used to be years ago, but broke away and became independent since."¹⁶

From the Church of God, Salem, West Virginia:

"Thank you for your inquiry concerning Herbert W. Armstrong. Several years ago this man was a minister of our faith. However, he jumped the track on British-Israelism, and a few other connected subjects, so he went off independent."¹⁷

From Herbert W. Armstrong:

"It is true that I fellowshipped and worked with the Stanberry church, beginning some 27 years ago, and was ordained by their Oregon Conference in 1931. Also that, about 1934, along with most of the Oregon brethren with whom I worked, I went along for a couple of years with that organization [Salem, West Virginia]."¹⁸

Mr. A. N. Dugger, who had belonged to both church organizations during Mr. Armstrong's membership with them, replying to an inquiry, added this comment on what took place:

"It was the year 1933 when Elder Armstrong separated from Stanberry and went along with about 100 or more ministers organizing the church at Salem [West Virginia] on the Bible foundation of church organization, with the

twelve, the seventy, and the seven. He became one of the seventy at that time, chosen so by lot. He remained in this place for a few years. I do not remember just how many, but he broke with the Salem organization over the keeping of the yearly sabbaths set forth in Leviticus, 23rd chapter.”¹⁹

An account of Mr. Armstrong's final secession from the Church of God, as given by Herman L. Hoeh, reads as follows:

“The Church of God brethren with whom they associated became so intensely interested that Mr. Armstrong soon found himself speaking at their insistence—then preaching to small groups in Oregon!

“Not long after his ordination in 1931 (See *A History of the True Church*, by Dugger and Dodd, p. 304), a momentous juncture occurred. A movement was under foot to organize the local congregations of the Church of God under human government—a financial board of seven men. By 1933 certain leading ministers demanded that no more *new* truth be preached to the brethren. They were refusing to repent and allow the Holy Spirit to work through them to establish the truth that was ready to perish!

“Most of the congregations succumbed to spiritual DEATH. The age of the Church of Sardis was over. *The Church period of Philadelphia was to begin!*”²⁰

An Independent Movement Launched

We have endeavored to present these biographical details objectively, utilizing original sources and studiously avoiding “opposition” literature. In tracing the picture of changes from Quakerism to Methodism, to the Stanberry Church of God, to the Salem Church of God, and thence to an independent movement—with various personality clashes along the way—we cannot help observing a certain restlessness and independence, and what seems to be intolerance of the viewpoints of others.

Readers will form their own opinions about Herbert W. Armstrong's personal differences with workers and his

secessions from several religious groups. He makes his own explanation in a recent issue of *The Plain Truth*, where he also mentions that in 1957 he appointed his son Garner Ted Armstrong to be his vice-president and representative in control of all Radio Church of God affairs. In installment seventy-three of "The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong," this paragraph occurs, quoted from Roderick C. Meredith, second vice-president:

"Until very recently, Mr. Armstrong was hesitant about making such an important decision for two reasons. First, he had tried to work and cooperate with other ministers time and again in his early ministry. But *always* he was disappointed. These other men—in *nearly every case*—eventually turned to *lying*, to *stealing* God's tithe money, *adultery* or, they were just incompetent—and God bore no 'fruit' through them."²¹

So after the several ventures with various religious organizations, Mr. Armstrong launched into his own independent movement. He has outlined the thinking that led him into this. He skims through the pages of church history, selecting such incidents and persons as fit into his views, rejecting all others, and claiming descent from the true church of God from apostolic times.

Thus, to him, the line of "the true church" runs through Constantine of Mananali (A.D. c. 684) and Simeon, one of the officers involved in stoning this Constantine to death, the Athyngain and the Paulicians (c. 650), the Bogomiles (c. 1000), Peter de Bruys (c. 1140), Peter Waldo (twelfth century), the Lollards (fourteenth century) and the Waldenses. Then in more modern times he selects Stephen Mumford who crossed from England to Rhode Island in 1664 and began to raise up Seventh Day Baptist converts. The Seventh Day Baptists Mr. Armstrong now rejects because they "joined themselves together to form the Seventh-Day Baptist General Conference and thereby ceased to be the true Church of God. Soon they began teaching the pagan Trinity doctrine and the immortality of human souls!"²²

Ellen G. White and the Seventh-day Adventist Church are rejected in similar fashion because, according to Armstrong, they signed the following covenant:

"We, the undersigned, hereby ASSOCIATE OURSELVES TOGETHER AS A CHURCH, *taking the name of Seventh-Day Adventist . . .*"

Mr. Armstrong's comment on this is:

"Once again men forgot that they cannot organize themselves *into* the Church of God. They can only organize themselves *out* of the Church of God!"²³

Such rejection of all other religious bodies appears repeatedly in Radio Church of God literature. All other groups in these last days are categorized as false. Note the following example of this sweeping rejection of other church bodies:

"God has *not* convoked weekly religious meetings on Sunday morning!

"Neither are we to assemble on Saturday with an apostatizing church which sees the argument about the Sabbath but which follows the false visions of a woman 'prophetess' and rejects the gospel of *the kingdom of God*. God is not in these churches. They merely assemble themselves together, by their own authority and not by the command of God's ministers."²⁴

We now proceed to examine specific Bible doctrines and compare them with the Radio Church of God.

REFERENCES

1. Roderick C. Meredith, *The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast*, pages 48, 49.
2. *The Plain Truth*, August, 1959, page 14.
3. *Ibid.*, July, 1953, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Vol. 1, p. 180.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
7. *The Plain Truth*, February, 1959, pages 17, 18.
8. *The Autobiography of Herbert W. Armstrong*, Vol. 1, p. 311.
9. *The Plain Truth*, August, 1959, page 15.
10. *Ibid.*, p. 16.
11. *Ibid.*

12. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
13. *Ibid.*, January 1960, pp. 9, 10.
14. *Ibid.*, December, 1959, p. 9.
15. *Ibid.*, April, 1960, pp. 5, 6.
16. Letter dated March 8, 1953.
17. Letter dated March 11, 1953.
18. Letter dated October 10, 1954.
19. Letter dated March 1, 1960.
20. Herman L. Hoeh, *A True History of the True Church*, pages 26, 27.
21. *The Plain Truth*, September, 1967, page 21.
22. Hoeh, *op. cit.*, p. 23.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 25.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

3.

Teachings Related to Salvation

Is an experience with sin necessary for our salvation? Does God intentionally keep people spiritually blinded? What is meant by conversion and new birth? Are men saved by grace? What is the ultimate destiny of man?

A Preview of Teachings on Salvation

On some Bible doctrines the Radio Church of God holds views similar to those of most Christians; on others, it differs widely. One of the latter is the basic doctrine of salvation, the doctrine of how God saves sinners.

In the first place, Armstrong and his associates teach that God is *not* trying to save mankind in this age prior to Christ's second coming. Most people, they say, will have their opportunity to be saved during the millennium after Christ comes; and the gospel is now being preached not to save people, but only "as a witness" that the end of the age is near. They believe that God is now purposely letting mankind indulge in sin and suffer the consequences; He deliberately withholds from them a knowledge of His ways, so that they will manage their own lives and thus experience suffering. Thereby they will learn that following their own inclinations leads to sorrow, and thus they will be ready to accept God's ways later, when they are "called" to salvation—either during the millennium or subsequently.

Satan is said to be God's instrument to bring about this condition of things, all his activity being ordained of God.

With this in mind, it is reasoned that Adam and Eve did not "fall" in the Garden of Eden, but rather followed God's plan for the good of mankind. It is argued that it would be unreasonable to think that Satan did anything contrary to God's will, because God is more powerful than Satan.

Lucifer, who became Satan, was originally created perfect, but his perfection did not endure. He became puffed up with pride and aspired "to knock God off His throne" and assume rulership of the universe. Armstrong says God wants mankind to have a more enduring perfection, so He created man with an evil nature that would naturally go contrary to God's ways, that through an experience with sin and suffering—an experience considered essential according to Armstrong theology—man would gain a more enduring perfection. Thus there is really no "controversy" going on between Christ and Satan; all is proceeding according to the divine plan.

Jesus, when on earth, says Armstrong, spoke in parables in order to hide truth from the people, so that they would continue in their own evil ways. Only a few were allowed to comprehend His words—and these were "called" or predestined to salvation during the present age. In modern times the "called" ones are those who accept Radio Church of God teachings. All others remain blinded now, but will have their blindness removed during the millennium, when "God really sets His hand to save the world."

The Radio Church of God considers belief in a new birth during this life as false. Instead, people are "begotten of God" in this age, and will be born again at the resurrection. If obedient to God in this life, men and women will be born of the Spirit into the "God-family" at the resurrection, and they will then be actual begotten (not adopted) sons and daughters of God and will actually *be God!* Thus salvation is said to be the completion of a 7,000-year process begun at creation—a process of self-reproduction on the part of God.

It teaches that at Christ's coming those born again by

resurrection will receive spirit bodies, while the rest of humanity will remain mortal. Christ will descend the same day on the Mount of Olives and establish His kingdom at Jerusalem, subduing His opponents with force. Those born again to immortality at His coming will be made kings and priests to reign with Christ (this is the "reward" Christ brings with Him), and they will be the instruments through whom Christ will reeducate and save the world. Through their mercy the rest of the world can obtain mercy.

A small remnant of humanity, it is said, will never accept God's ways, and they will be destroyed at the end of the millennium by the second death. However, no literal descendants of Israel will be in this group, because the covenant to Abraham was made *unconditional* after Abraham's test (Genesis 22:16-18), and "all Israel shall be saved." Romans 11:26.

Israel is said to include not only the Jews, considered to be the descendants of Judah, but also the descendants of the ten tribes, said to have been "lost" after the dispersion. It is claimed that they migrated to western Europe, and are now identifiable as British, American, and certain Nordic peoples.

Thus, according to the Radio Church of God, only a few are called to salvation in this age, while God hides truth from most of the world.¹ Those who recognize their blindness, and kill their self-will through burial with Christ in baptism and obedience to God's laws (and accept Radio Church of God teachings) will receive salvation at the end of this age. It is no disgrace if your loved ones are among those blinded now, for "God's PLAN called for the removal of blindness from only a *few* NOW. It is HIS responsibility!"²

Most Christians regard the Bible as a book mainly concerned with man's salvation, but the Radio Church of God does not. Armstrong boldly questions, "Can you believe MOST of the Bible is totally unconcerned with the matter of salvation?"³

It seems presumptuous for any man to say that "God has made man's natural mind so that it wants to do things that are *contrary to HIS laws*."⁴ When we read in the Holy Scriptures that "grace and truth came by Jesus Christ" (John 1:17), it sounds strange to read in a Radio Church of God pamphlet this question: "Why did Christ hide the truth from the world?"⁵

This line of thought leads to such unfortunate conclusions as this: "Only a relatively small number will receive salvation in this age. These will be used to teach, rule, and judge those called later in the millennium (Rev. 1:6; 1 Cor. 6:2)."⁶

Such teaching virtually makes God responsible for all the sin and suffering of the ages. If Jesus did not teach saving truth and reveal it to men—if He came, as H. W. Armstrong says, only to bear witness—there is a good deal of futility and needless suffering involved in waiting for the millennium when "Christ will begin to convert and save the entire world during His reign" and "all people will then come to know God."

Paul informs us that all men are lost in sin and destined for death because of Adam's sin. Romans 5:14, 17-19. The same apostle argues that because one man's sin produced death, so through Christ's obedience "countless men's sins are met with the free gift of grace, and the result is justification before God." Romans 5:15, Phillips.

In Romans 11:32 Paul says: "God hath concluded ["penned together," Phillips; made "prisoners," NEB] them all [both Jews and Gentiles] in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all." This text does not mean that God is responsible for blinding the minds of men, but that both unbelieving Jews and Gentiles may here and now find forgiveness and salvation from sin by faith in Christ Jesus.

The parable of Matthew 20:1-16 clearly teaches that laborers are invited to work in the owner's vineyard now, and are paid for their services at the end of this probation-

ary age, not in a far-off millennial age. Jesus stressed that the gospel is available to all now. "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. Not in a future age, but now.

When Mr. Armstrong contends that Christ taught in parables "to hide the truth from the world," he either ignores or misunderstands the context of Matthew 13:3-15 and Mark 4:2-13. When Christ spoke in parables, the sincere and faithful understood, but those "that are without" (Mark 4:11)—the willfully wicked whose "heart is waxed gross" (Matthew 13:15)—would not hear, and therefore could not be saved. The wicked blind their own eyes and harden their own hearts.

The Bible repeats ten times that God hardened Pharaoh's heart (Exodus 7 to 10); but these expressions (not all from the same Hebrew word) are to be explained in the light of other passages, such as Exodus 8:15: "When Pharaoh saw that there was respite, he hardened his heart, and harkened not unto them; as the Lord had said." See also Exodus 8:32; 9:34; 10:1. Even the heathen Philistines had it straight: "The Egyptians and Pharaoh hardened their hearts." 1 Samuel 6:6.

The great Sower sows the same seed in all types of soil. But human hearts (the soil of the parable) vary in receptive capacity, according to the individual will. Those who "will do His will" are the ones who "know of the doctrine." John 7:17. Or, as the RSV renders it: "If any man's will is to do His will, he shall know whether the teaching is from God."

Grace, Law, and Obedience

The Radio Church of God places marked emphasis on obedience after forgiveness, though it does not teach salvation by obedience only. Its teaching in these areas may be summarized as follows:

1. There are two laws, "One eternal" and "one temporary." The spiritual, eternal one—the moral law of Ten

Commandments—has been in effect since creation. The temporary one—the ceremonial law of the Old Testament—commenced with Moses. This latter law the legalistic Jews tried to force on the early Christians. Acts 15:5. It was added 430 years after the covenant was confirmed to Abraham. Galatians 3:17.

The strange thing is that the Radio Church of God says, in one of its pamphlets: "The weekly Sabbath and the annual Sabbaths stand or fall together." The argument continues: "The annual Sabbaths were NOT part of the law of Moses." It follows this analysis: "Whenever the Bible uses the expression 'sabbath days' with new moons and holy days, it is referring to THE WEEKLY SABBATH DAYS, the new moons and the ANNUAL holy days or feast days. The 'sabbath days' of Colossians 2:16 refers to the *weekly* sabbath. Compare I Chr. 23:31 with II Chr. 2:4; 31:3; Ezra 3:5; Neh. 10:33 and Ezek. 46:3. If it does away with one, it also abolishes the other."⁷

2. We can never earn salvation, nor does our faith give us eternal life. Ephesians 2:8, 9.

3. "God's grace alone, by itself, will not save us, since God will not GIVE His grace to a person who refuses to obey."⁸

4. "Grace is simply free, unmerited, undeserved pardon or forgiveness."⁹ God grants salvation on conditions, namely, "repentance, faith, surrender, and submission to God—as well as the condition of OBEDIENCE to His authority!"¹⁰

5. When a sinner repents and accepts Christ as an atonement for his sins, "he comes under the *grace* of God." Grace and faith in the shed blood of Christ must then be accompanied by law-abiding works.

6. If the believer willfully returns to the ways of sin,

it teaches, there remains no more sacrifice for his sins. He "will incur the death penalty once again—this time without any escape! (Heb. 10:26; II Pet. 2:21.)"¹¹

7. No conflict exists between law and grace because they go together. "It is not a matter of 'Law OR grace,'" says the Radio Church of God. "It is a matter of 'LAW AND GRACE!'"¹²

For more on this subject see Chapter 11.

Comments on the Above

Criticism and misunderstanding could arise from a difference of emphasis as between grace, faith, and obedience. However, one theological difference deserves note. The Radio Church of God describes grace as being solely "undeserved pardon or forgiveness," whereas evangelical Christians believe grace comprehends much more. It includes all the gifts of God to His creatures—forgiveness being one of them. The creation of man, with all his capacities and privileges, constituted an act of divine grace. The faith by which the believer accepts what grace offers is a gift of God—as the Radio Church of God also believes—and therefore grace stands as the great antecedent in the whole process of salvation.

The grace of God touches the sinner before he repents—"even when we were dead in sins." Paul says that God has "quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved)." Ephesians 2:5.

A singularly provocative statement in Radio Church of God literature on grace is this one by William F. Dankenbring, quoted in point No. 4 above:

"God's grace alone, by itself, will not save us since God will not GIVE His grace to a person who refuses to obey, who rebels against Him."¹³

In the same article Mr. Dankenbring says: "A sinner cannot *earn* salvation. . . . But through repentance, and the grace of God, he can receive it as a GIFT. He must, however, meet the TWIN conditions of *faith and obedience*."¹⁴

These statements imply that repentance precedes grace, and that grace is not given without faith and obedience. Actually, however, it is divine grace that first speaks to the sinner and leads him to repent: "Or despisest thou the riches of His goodness and forbearance and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" Romans 2:4.

The attribute of divine grace includes goodness, forbearance, long-suffering, and love. When a sinner, touched by God's grace through the Holy Spirit, yields his self-will, he is led to repentance. When he repents, confesses, and turns to God in faith, then and then only can he show the good works of obedience in his life. The believer is then "created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." Ephesians 2:10.

Faith and obedience are the *result* of accepting God's grace, not a *cause* for its presence. Law convinces men of sin, and grace leads them to repent, confess, and be saved from its condemnation. Law and grace begin and continue together, because in this way obedience becomes meaningful in the life victorious over willful sin. "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." Romans 8:1.

God's grace initiates every influence that leads man to repentance, and from that point sustains him in the victorious life and leads him to final redemption. In other words, all is of grace, as Wesley would say—repentance, confession, conversion, justification, good works, sanctification, and final redemption.

In contrast, the Radio Church of God says: "God gives us grace to remove our PAST sins. But now He expects us to surrender to His authority, and OBEY the spiritual Law which He ordained from the beginning for our GOOD!"¹⁵

This reasoning suggests that grace is limited to providing forgiveness for past sins, and that our obedience keeps us

from future sins—an unscriptural position, as shown above. Some concepts of repentance in Radio Church of God literature read a little strangely to evangelical Christians. For instance: "This confession of error [ignorance of truth] will actually be repentance!" "Repentance is a matter of *unlearning* false concepts." "Repentance" involves "RE-EDUCATION to a better way."¹⁶

While we can see an element of truth here, we think repentance takes in more than this. True, it brings justification before God because sins of the past, now confessed and repented of, are forgiven. And certainly reeducation follows during the whole of the believer's subsequent life, as he progresses in sanctification.

But repentance, with consequent forgiveness, has to be a continuous experience, whereas the Radio Church of God states that "justification refers only to the guilty PAST!"¹⁷ The believer experiences forgiveness and justification every time he inadvertently stumbles and falls into sin, and turns again in repentance. 1 John 2:1, 2. If he confesses his sins, he is forgiven and justified before God. Daily he may be in a justified state, even while growing in knowledge and grace through the sanctified life. We are justified by Christ's blood and saved by His life (both now and when Christ comes).

The Radio Church of God reasons in a circuitous manner in presenting the process of salvation. For example, the following, which also has a ring of legalism about it:

"We are not justified BY THE LAW—we are justified by the blood of Jesus Christ! But this justification will be given only on condition that we REPENT of our transgressions of God's Law—and so it is, after all, only the DOERS of the law that shall be justified (Rom. 2: 13)."¹⁸

Such statements give the impression that law observance constitutes the basis of salvation. It is much clearer to say that all who accept God's free grace can be saved, and that by His grace they are enabled to obey His law.

When we come to study the areas of conversion, the new

birth, and man's destiny, we meet matters of more serious import to the Christian life in Radio Church of God teaching.

What Is Meant by Conversion and the New Birth?

Conversion, says the Radio Church of God, is *not* the new birth. Conversion is comparable to what we think of as "conception." The new birth will take place at the resurrection of the body, when we will be born into the kingdom of God. Armstrong theology equates being born again with receiving immortality. There can be no new birth without "inherent immortal life."

The Radio Church of God cites 1 Corinthians 15:50-53 in this connection as a key passage, a text devoted wholly to the change from man's mortal earthly state to the immortal heavenly state at the resurrection. We submit that this passage contains nothing akin to Christ's statement to Nicodemus on being "born of water and of the Spirit." John 3:5. The word "Spirit" in John 3:5, 8 refers to being baptized by the Holy Ghost, the baptism that comes to the born-again believer in Jesus. This is the new birth in Christ, and this faith in Christ is what gives us victory over the world: "Whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith." 1 John 5:4.

The Radio Church of God, by contrast, teaches that "Spirit" in John 3:5, 8 implies a spirit body and therefore refers to immortality after the resurrection.¹⁰

The Radio Church of God maintains that new believers are touched by the Holy Spirit, an experience expressed by the word "begotten," or "begetting." Then at the resurrection they are "born again." They build this reasoning on H. W. Armstrong's assertion that the Greek word *gennaō* is wrongly translated "born" instead of "begotten," by translators who "did not, themselves, UNDERSTAND God's Plan."²⁰

They say the translators made this "stupendous error" because they failed to recognize that "the original Greek,

in which the New Testament was written, has *only the one word for both meanings*,"²¹ i.e., begotten and born—an error supposedly clarified by reference to human conception, or begettal, which is not birth. When the baby takes its first breath, it has been born. Since *gennaō* should be translated "begotten," we are told, therefore we are *begotten* by God in this life, but not *born* until the resurrection.

Did New Testament Greek have only one word, *gennaō*, for both meanings—*conception* and *birth*? Paul speaks of himself "as one born out of due time" (1 Corinthians 15:8), and he used a Greek word meaning *aborted*. In Luke 1:24 "Elizabeth conceived," and Luke used a form of the Greek word *sullambanō*, not *gennaō*. When Paul spoke of Rebecca's conception (Romans 9:10), he did not use *gennaō*; rather, he used still another form—*echō koitēn*. The reference of Hebrews 11:11 to Sara's conception makes use of another Greek word, *katabolē*. Luke in recounting the angels' announcement to the shepherds about Christ's birth (Luke 2:11) used the Greek word *tiktō*, a word used for birth in two other New Testament texts, Matthew 2:2 and Revelation 12:4.

Jesus, says one of the Ambassador College Bible Correspondence lessons, "was born a very Son of God by His resurrection (Romans 1:4)."²² We believe the Bible teaches that He was the Son of God before the crucifixion, for when Caiaphas adjured Him, "Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God," Jesus replied, "You have said so" (Matthew 26:63, RSV), or, as Phillips gives it, "I am." Christ was the Son of God before the resurrection, the *monogenēs* or the unique, the only One. The Father's testimony was: "This is My beloved Son." Matthew 3:17. John gave this testimony: "And I saw, and bare record that this is the Son of God." John 1:34. These statements both refer to events long before the resurrection.

All that Romans 1:4 says is that by the mighty act of the resurrection, He was "declared" or "designated" (RSV,

NEB) or "patently marked out" (Phillips) before men as what he was—the Son of God.

Is Baptism Necessary?

"Repent, and be baptized," said Peter at Pentecost. Acts 2:38. The Radio Church of God teaches baptism by immersion, and here we give a summary of its teachings on the subject:

1. It teaches that the proper mode is "water baptism," and it "IS A REQUIRED PART OF THE WAY OF SALVATION!"

2. It teaches that baptism must be "'in the name'—by the authority—of Jesus Christ."

3. It teaches that the Holy Spirit comes to the believer *after* baptism. "THERE IS NO *PROMISE* THAT ANYONE WILL RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT UNTIL BAPTISED IN WATER—even though God in His wisdom and love may on rare occasions make an exception."

4. It teaches that baptism should occur "as soon as one has been convicted in his heart of his past sins and sinful life." Though baptism should not be delayed, children do not reach the maturity needed for the self-discipline of repentance until about the age of twenty-five. It is "almost impossible" to be sure of maturity in this respect "under age 21 or 25," and "especially under 11." Adults should be baptized immediately or as soon as possible after reaching real repentance and faith.

5. It teaches that baptism does not have to be administered by ordained ministers only. Those who go forth preaching and teaching the gospel ("the modern organized denominations preach a *different gospel*") are the ones commissioned to do the baptizing. This means that since the Radio Church of God claims to be the only true church, it considers all baptisms by other denominations invalid. Teams of men from Ambassador College go out on baptizing tours as occasion arises.²³

As far as numbers 1 and 2 above are concerned the teachings of the Radio Church of God do not differ greatly

from those of most evangelical bodies. But regarding numbers 3 and 5 we would offer a qualifying comment.

It is the work of the Holy Spirit to bring a sinner to repentance, a ministry performed by the Spirit prior to baptism. So in this significant sense the Spirit, though not received by the believer in the capacity promised in Acts 2:38, comes to a person before baptism. Who would say that Cornelius in Acts 10:44-48 was not under the influence of the Holy Spirit before he received Christian baptism, even without understanding the term "Holy Ghost"?

We do not believe that the presence of the Holy Spirit can be so rigidly tied only to persons who have experienced baptism by immersion at the hands of Radio Church of God workers, or any other workers or ministers. We think Mr. Armstrong senses some embarrassment by this assertion, for as we have seen, he adds this safeguard, "even though God in His wisdom and love may on rare occasions make an exception."

What Is the Destiny of Man?

Another question arises in connection with the Radio Church of God's teaching on salvation. H. W. Armstrong has adopted and developed the idea that as a result of the process of salvation, men will eventually become gods. The real purpose of man's life, he teaches, is that he may eventually become Creator and God. In developing this teaching, the words "you will actually BE GOD" are used.²⁴

On this point it is of interest to note the similarity between Armstrong theology and Mormon teaching. In the Mormon book *The Articles of Faith*, by James E. Talmadge, a book "prepared by appointment, and published by the church," this statement appears: "We believe in a god who is Himself progressive. . . . In spite of the opposition of all other sects, in face of direct charges of blasphemy, the Church proclaims the eternal truth, '*As man is, God once was; as God is, man may become.*'"²⁵

This idea that man may become God is not in harmony with the prophetic word of God: "Before Me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after Me." Isaiah 43:10. "I am . . . the first and the last." Revelation 1:11. "I am the first, and I am the last; and beside Me there is no God." Isaiah 44:6. To be "the sons of God" (1 John 3:2) is one thing, but to *be God* is quite another. In fact, the first satanic sin lay in the words: "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:14); and the heart of the first satanic lie is found in the statement: "Ye shall be as gods." Genesis 3:5. This idea figures prominently in the philosophy of Hinduism also.

The Radio Church of God teaches that redemption is but the completion of creation. "Salvation . . . is a *PROCESS*."²⁶ This is further defined as "a process in *three* stages."²⁷

The Radio Church of God seems to confuse the concept of salvation through Christ, apparently even scoffing sometimes at the idea. Further, it says that those who preach that men are saved by "accepting Christ" also teach " 'NO WORKS'—and presto-chango, you're pronounced 'SAVED'!"²⁸ But in this way it distorts the facts.

What most evangelical Christians teach is that the believer receives the Holy Spirit when, convicted of sin, he repents and accepts Christ. Acts 2:38. From that point onward the believer grows in grace, becomes more and more Christlike. Because he has been born again, he manifests the works of Christ. He is "created in Christ Jesus unto good works." See Ephesians 2:8-10. Then, when his mortal life is ended, he is granted immortality at the second coming of Jesus (1 Corinthians 15:52), and thereafter "we shall be like him." 1 John 3:2. That is enough, without reading *divinity* into such a precious promise. "So shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:17.

REFERENCES

1. C. P. Meredith, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" pages 1, 2.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
3. H. W. Armstrong, "What Do You Mean, Salvation?" page 1.
4. Meredith, *op. cit.*, p. 2.
5. *Ibid.*
6. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
7. H. W. Armstrong, "Pagan Holidays—or God's Holydays—Which?" (25-page pamphlet), page 4.
8. *The Plain Truth*, June, 1966, page 26.
9. *Ibid.*
10. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
11. *Ibid.*
12. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 27.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 47.
16. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 5, pages 12, 13.
17. H. W. Armstrong, "What Is the Purpose of the Resurrection?" page 2.
18. H. W. Armstrong, "What Kind of Faith Is Required for Salvation?" page 11.
19. See C. P. Meredith, "What Will You Be Like in the Resurrection?" page 1.
20. H. W. Armstrong, "Just What Do You Mean, Born Again?" page 7.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 16, page 16.
23. H. W. Armstrong, "All About Water Baptism." A 12-page pamphlet.
24. H. W. Armstrong, "Why Were You Born?" page 21.
25. James E. Talmadge, *The Articles of Faith*, pages 442, 443.
26. H. W. Armstrong, "Why Were You Born?" page 11.
27. *The Plain Truth*, April, 1967, page 14.
28. H. W. Armstrong, "Why Were You Born?" page 11.

4.

The Coming Kingdom of God

What is the gospel of the kingdom of God? Where will the kingdom be established? Are certain races promised rulership? Who will be subjects of the kingdom? Will forced obedience be necessary?

The Gospel of the Kingdom

Herbert W. Armstrong claims that men have tried to separate the kingdom idea from the life and teachings of Jesus, a charge with considerable support in fact. Higher criticism and modernist philosophy have certainly tended to obscure or to destroy the eschatology of the New Testament. Modern existential philosophy, for example, in general explains away the second coming by equating the coming of Christ with conversion. Extreme modernism takes the supernatural out of the gospel until nothing is left but confusing humanist rationalization, with no hope of ultimate redemption and a higher life to come.

Having said this, we must face the disappointing fact that Radio Church of God leaders also employ methods of Biblical interpretation which bring confusion into this subject. They identify the Israelites with British, American, and certain Nordic peoples, and apply all the Old Testament promises literally to them.

Beyond this, they introduce what amounts to a second chance during a millennium on earth, for those living when Christ comes—and project a further chance of salvation

after the millennium for the resurrected dead of all ages. This combination and adaptation of British-Israel, Mormon, and Millennial Dawn teachings is further complicated by an indiscriminate use of Old Testament prophecies with little regard to conditional and unconditional prophecy.

From Radio Church of God literature we will now try to set forth briefly what it teaches about the gospel of the kingdom.

The Radio Church of God Teaching

1. It teaches that not one of the present-day churches teaches correctly what the gospel of the kingdom of God is; the true gospel presents primarily a message, not about Christ, but about the kingdom of God.¹

2. It teaches that the only true gospel of Jesus Christ "has not been preached for 18½ centuries." That is, there has been no true gospel message preached in the world from the days of the apostles to the time of Herbert W. Armstrong.²

3. It teaches that Daniel 2:28 reveals God's plan to set up His kingdom "*in the latter days*," that is, "actually within the next two decades—THIS LAST HALF OF THE 20TH CENTURY!"³

4. It teaches that Daniel 2:44 ("in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom") refers to the brittle ten-toe kingdoms of Daniel's image. Connecting this with Daniel 7 and Revelation 17 reveals a United States of Europe, now forming out of the European Common Market. This confederacy, they believe, will be a union of ten kings or kingdoms (Revelation 17:12) that, with the backing of a false church, will resurrect the Roman Empire. Revelation 17:8. During the days of the ten-toe kingdoms, which will last "possibly not more than two to three-and-a-half years," the God of heaven will set up His kingdom.⁴

5. It teaches that the ten servants in the parable of Luke 19:13 represent the ten tribes of Israel, and the para-

ble makes it clear that "the Kingdom of God is a literal GOVERNMENT to be set up [on earth] at CHRIST'S SECOND COMING."⁵

6. It teaches that the throne of Christ in that kingdom will be the throne of David in Jerusalem. Luke 1:32.⁶

7. It teaches that "David and all the saints" will be resurrected, made immortal, and placed in complete charge of the reunited house of Israel, with each of the twelve apostles as king over one of the tribes, and "perhaps the Apostle Paul—the apostle to the Gentiles (Gal. 2:8)—will be given a position of rule over the Gentile nations in the millennium. In fact he may be given a very high position similar to that of David since—compared to the other apostles—he labored 'more abundantly than they all' (I Cor. 15:10)."⁷

8. It teaches that when Christ returns to establish the kingdom, the "people of Israel" (by which Mr. Armstrong means "America, Britain and the democratic peoples of Northwestern Europe") will be brought back from the captivity ("the time of Jacob's trouble") which overtakes them just before the second advent of Christ. This view is based on Amos 9:14, 15: "I will bring again the captivity of My people of Israel. . . . And they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." By this statement is meant a reunion of Israel and Judah in Palestine. Jeremiah 30:1-11 is quoted with interpolated comments as proof of this view.⁸

Some Comments on the Above Teachings

The Radio Church of God emphasizes only a part of the truth in its teaching of what it calls the true gospel—the message primarily about the kingdom rather than about Christ. Did not Jesus come primarily to present Himself to men and to reveal God and truth to men? Was not His great mission to reveal a Person, because apart from that Person, the place—or kingdom—would have no meaning?

John, speaking of the young Man Jesus whom he had

baptized, said: "He must grow greater and greater and I less and less." John 3:30, Phillips.

Jesus took pains to ask the disciples certain things about Himself: "Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?" "But whom say ye that I am?" Matthew 16:13, 15. What they thought about *Him* became the most important thing in His work. There would be no kingdom without belief in the divine King.

Jesus declared John to be the greatest man of his day, and, of Jesus, John said, "He that cometh after me is mightier than I." Matthew 3:11.

Heaven purposed through the incarnation to draw men to Christ. "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me." John 12:32. The spirit of antichrist is revealed by its hostile attitude to the divine Person. 1 John 4:3.

Scores of references stress the necessity of faith in Christ as Saviour of the world, in whom men must believe in order to enter the kingdom. Almost the last words of Scripture focus on Him: "Surely I come quickly." Revelation 22:20. Both King and kingdom are important, but without Him there can be no kingdom.

The Radio Church of God emphasizes the idea that the gospel concerns mainly a place, or territory, so much so that it offers the following definition in one of its Bible correspondence lessons: "Therefore we might define the true GOSPEL as 'the GOOD NEWS of the TERRITORY of a KING ruling over SUBJECTS with LAWS and government.'"⁹ Christ the King is not excluded, but the centrality of Christ is overshadowed by the dominant ideas of the *place* (Palestine), and the *people* (British, American, and certain Nordic nations—the British-Israel theory).

Regarding No. 2 above—that the true gospel was not preached after apostolic days until Herbert W. Armstrong appeared—would it not be legitimate to ask, Did God have no preachers of the true gospel between the apostle John and Herbert W. Armstrong? This idea presents life through

those ages as meaningless, and sincere men who fearlessly preached God's Word as impostors. It makes God cruelly partial in keeping untold millions in ignorance, blindness, and suffering for nearly twenty centuries.

To pinpoint the time for Christ's coming kingdom within the brief period mentioned in No. 3 seems tantamount to time setting, which the Bible rules impossible and history unwise. In this instance it is supported by nothing but human intuition. Many Christians hold the imminence of the end, but no one knows enough to be specific about time.

When the European Common Market (No. 4 above) is made the fulfillment of Daniel 2:44, Daniel 7, and Revelation 17, no proof is given. Others too have speculated regarding this idea, but in the absence of proof the Bible student can go no farther in interpreting prophecy than the Word itself allows. We need to remember that Daniel 2:43 simply states that these kingdoms "will not hold together." RSV.

In asserting that the ten servants in the parable of Luke 19:13 (No. 5 above) represent the ten lost tribes of Israel, and therefore that the parable teaches the setting up of a literal government on earth at the second advent, the Radio Church of God stretches a parable into a prophecy. Parables as a rule teach one spiritual lesson and do not advance new basic doctrine or prophetic interpretation.

Ten was a convenient round number used by Jesus. In Luke 15:4 Jesus spoke parabolically of "an hundred sheep," and one was lost. Jesus was teaching lessons about the *lost one*, and used the flock of 100 as background with no special meaning attached to the specific number. In verse eight a woman had ten pieces of silver and lost one. *Ten* had no specific meaning, but the lost *one* did. We cannot attach meanings to every part of a parable, or highlight one particular point. Ten servants, ten tribes, a literal kingdom on earth—it takes a lot of subjective thinking and a certain way of handling Scripture to put these things together as does the Radio Church of God.

No. 6 above, of course, goes along with the British-American-Nordic-Israel ideas. Certainly Luke 1:32 predicts the inheritance by Christ of the Davidic promises. Had God's ancient people been true to Him, He would have established a kingdom that would have enlightened the world. But the conditions of obedience were not observed, and the promises were transferred to Christ, as the great descendant of David. "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory." Matthew 25:31. The kingdom will be established in a renewed earth (Revelation 21:1) after the final judgment. See the great white throne judgment of Revelation 20:11 and the part played by the Father and the Son in judgment in Romans 14:10 and Hebrews 12:23.

The glorious reign of David became for Old Testament writers the outstanding symbol of the future Messianic Kingdom. Isaiah 9:6, 7; compare 2 Samuel 7:13; Psalms 2:6, 7; 132:11. The angel who told Mary that she was to become the mother of Jesus, "the Son of the Highest," who would take the throne of David and reign "forever," quoted some of these prophecies. The last chances for fulfillment of God's purpose for Israel as a nation came to God's ancient people between their return from the Babylonian Captivity and the rejection of Jesus as Messiah. Note Jeremiah 12:14-17, for example, where God said: "*If they will diligently learn the ways of My people, to swear by My name . . . ; then shall they be built in the midst of My people. But if they will not obey, I will utterly pluck up and destroy that nation, saith the Lord.*"

This observation answers also the assertion in No. 7 above, that "David and all the saints," being made immortal at the resurrection, will reign over the reunited house of Israel, et cetera, which involves the ever-present British-American-Israel ideas. The concept that Paul, by virtue of his super labors for God, may inherit a high position over the Gentiles seems highly imaginative. We think

rather that he may be glad in that day to find neither Jew nor Gentile and certainly less regard for office and rank than we have in our class-conscious world today.

One wonders how people can hold to such thoroughly discredited ideas as the British-American-Israel theory. It is not only devoid of acceptable evidence; it is positively unacceptable on the grounds of its racial bias—a thing totally absent from the New Testament.

The Second Coming and Subsequent Events

The Radio Church of God teaches the following:

1. That immediately preceding the second advent, the seven last plagues will be poured out. Our solar system will be disrupted and the earth shaken out of its orbit. Revelation 16:8; Isaiah 24:18-20. Thus, it is claimed, the earth will be closer to the sun and its scorching heat will be felt. Revelation 16:8.¹⁰

2. It teaches that Christ's return is imminent, and the whole living human family will see Him come. He will come from the east to west "as lightning," which is the only manner in which the whole population on a round world could see Him come. Matthew 24:27; Revelation 7:1.¹¹

3. It teaches that the "beast" and the "false prophet" will gather the armies of earth to fight the returning Christ at the battle of Armageddon. Revelation 16:13, 14, 16; 17:13, 14. They will believe Him to be the antichrist and the enemy of the world. But Christ will be victorious. Revelation 19:11-16, 19; Zechariah 14:12. After the fall of Rome, Christ "will *stamp out* the pagan religions and false Christianity. . . . Then He will make His HOLY SPIRIT available to all human beings."¹²

It teaches that at Christ's return the saints will be resurrected and born again; they will become immortal, but the living sinners will remain mortal. They believe that Christ will descend the same day to the Mount of Olives and establish His world government in Jerusalem, and that Abraham and all his children in Christ will receive

the promised kingdom and will rule over all other nations during the millennium. This kingdom on earth, they believe, is the kingdom prepared by Christ for those who love Him—*not* a kingdom in heaven.¹³

5. During this millennial reign, Christ commences the conversion and salvation of the entire world, with the help of the resurrected saints, says the Radio Church of God. The world, they say, will be united through the medium of a pure language—it “may well be based on English”; religious confusion will be removed, and all but the most stubborn will be converted. (This is a modified form of universalism, and is somewhat akin to the teachings of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.) The millennium, it teaches, is the time set by God “to really save people.” In this connection it is said: “Yes, tomorrow’s mayors are going to *force* their subjects to obey God and to receive His blessings. They will impose a warm and merciful rule that will bring *compulsory joy!*”¹⁴

6. It teaches that after the thousand years (Revelation 20:5, 11, 12), the vast company of unsaved dead are resurrected and “GIVEN THEIR FIRST CHANCE FOR SALVATION.” There will then be many more to accept salvation, they believe, than during the millennium, because these are the resurrected dead from the time of Adam, who never had a chance to accept eternal life. They were spiritually blinded when they lived on earth, and this is their first, not second, chance, says the Radio Church of God. The people of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 11:22), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15) will come up in this resurrection, to have their first chance of salvation, it is asserted.¹⁵

7. It teaches that the few finally impenitent will be annihilated in the lake of fire which “is going to be burning all during the millennium!”¹⁶

Some Comments

Partial answers to some of the above assertions are provided elsewhere in this book. We here consider but a few points.

The ideas involved in the use of force (No. 5 above) as God's way of getting obedience from people during the millennium on earth, do not have a New Testament ring about them. The use of Isaiah 2:3, 4 to show that the words, "He shall judge among the people" mean to *compel* the people, is open to serious question. Many Bible scholars regard Isaiah 2:1-4 as one of the many conditional prophecies of the Old Testament contingent upon Israel's obedience. But the Radio Church of God does not accept this principle of prophetic interpretation, so must find some way of making these conditional prophecies fit into a pattern of future events.

The idea that God *compels* fits into Biblical teachings of judgment upon the finally impenitent, but not into the idea of freedom of choice during probationary time. The ideas of a time during the millennium on earth, when immortal saints who know H. W. Armstrong's doctrines will teach mortals who do not, lead to this dilemma of compulsion.

Mr. Armstrong asserts that those who have died without Christ have never had a chance of salvation (No. 6 above), and therefore will be resurrected to have their "first chance."

In the case of the untold millions who have died without Christ, God's justice, love, and mercy have made every provision. The psalmist spoke of those born in a privileged position to know the truth when he said, "The Lord shall count, when He writeth up the people, that this man was born there." Psalm 87:6. And the heathen are remembered in these words: "I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to them that know Me: behold Philistia, and Tyre, with Ethiopia; this man was born there." Verse 4. God takes account of a man's circumstances, and none will be condemned unjustly.

The wicked are those who "did not like to retain God in their knowledge," and therefore "God gave them over to a reprobate mind." Romans 1:28. There is no respect of persons with God, who knows every heart. He has im-

planted a sense of right and wrong within us, which led the apostle to say: "For as many as have sinned without law shall also perish without law: and as many as have sinned in the law shall be judged by the law." Romans 2:12. Paul's argumentation, in brief, holds that the Jew, or the believer, will be judged according to his knowledge and practice of revealed law and truth, and the Gentile will be judged according to the unwritten law of conscience. All of this means that (1) we should not charge God with never giving some people a chance, and (2) all men will be judged by God impartially, in mercy and in love according to the circumstances in which their lives have been lived.

No Future Day of Salvation

In developing the idea that now is not the only time of salvation, the Radio Church of God quotes God's words to Israel: "In an acceptable time have I heard thee, and in *a* day of salvation have I helped thee." Isaiah 49:8. The inference drawn is that the present life is only *a day*, not *the day*, of salvation.¹⁷

Let us now hear how the apostle Paul quotes Isaiah in this regard:

"We then, as workers together with Him, beseech you also that ye receive not the grace of God in vain. (For He saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succored thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)" 2 Corinthians 6:1, 2.

His appeal is to receive God's grace NOW. No text in the Bible states that a further day of salvation will be granted during the millennium or at any subsequent time. There have been local saving acts of God during the church's earthly exile, such as the Exodus, within probationary time. But all opportunity for eternal salvation will terminate in the second advent, a truth which may be set forth in this way:

When Christ appears, it will be as King of kings and

Lord of lords. He will judge mankind, for He will no longer be a Mediator between God and man.

Certain events will take place:

Revelation 14:14: The Son of man comes in glory "and in His hand a sharp sickle."

Revelation 14:15: An angel from the temple of God cries "with a loud voice," "Thrust in Thy sickle, and reap: . . . for the harvest of the earth is ripe."

Matthew 13:39: Jesus said, "The harvest is the end of the world."

1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

The wording of Matthew 3:12 (the gathering of the wheat and the burning of the chaff) makes no suggestion that the "chaff," or the wicked, will continue to live after separation from the wheat. The harvest is the end—hence the cry, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved." Jeremiah 8:20.

The Radio Church of God teachings on "another day of salvation" after the second advent ignore altogether the mediatorial work of our Lord Jesus Christ in heaven after His ascension. The author of Hebrews states clearly: "For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Hebrews 9:24.

This chapter continues speaking of Christ's work for man's salvation, and closes with one of the New Testament's strong statements showing that when Christ comes He will bring salvation for His people: "So Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin but to save those who are eagerly waiting for Him." Verse 28, RSV.

Just before the Lord returns, when His heavenly ministry closes for all who believe in His atoning sacrifice, these awful words are pronounced in heaven: "He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still." Revelation 22:11.

These are among the most solemn words in the entire Bible, for they indicate the close of human probation. They constitute the strongest possible evidence against all ideas of another probation during the millennium after the second advent.

REFERENCES

1. H. W. Armstrong, "All About Water Baptism," page 5; "Just What Do You Mean, Kingdom of God?" page 3.
2. H. W. Armstrong, "Just What Do You Mean, Kingdom of God?" page 3.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 14, 15.
6. *The Plain Truth*, July, 1965, page 8.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 8, 47.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 47, 48.
9. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 2, page 7.
10. *Ibid.*, Lesson 8, page 13.
11. *The Plain Truth*, April, 1965, page 48; *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 9, page 14.
12. *The Plain Truth*, April, 1965, pages 26, 27; *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 3, pages 6, 7.
13. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 6, page 6; Lesson 13, pages 6, 14.
14. *The Plain Truth*, January, 1966, page 28; March, 1967, pages 22-28; *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 6, page 5.
15. C. P. Meredith, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" page 4.
16. Garner Ted Armstrong, "Satan's Fate," page 2.
17. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 3, page 13; Lesson 6, page 16.

5.

The Millennium and End of Evil

What is the purpose of the millennium? Who will participate in it? What events mark its beginning and close? Will salvation be available during this time?

In brief, the Radio Church of God teaches the following in regard to the millennium: (1) For a period of 6,000 years "God has kept hands off the affairs of this world," but this period has now almost expired.¹ (2) It teaches that "in less than forty years all nations are going to live in Utopia! They will be *forced* to learn the ways of peace." God is soon to establish "a MILLENNIUM of plush and happy living" beyond human dreams.² (3) They teach that during this period Christ will reign over the nations of earth on the literal throne of His father David (which still exists and is known as the Stone of Scone beneath the royal throne in Westminster Abbey, London).³ (4) It teaches that all Israel will be gathered the second time from the heathen nations.⁴ (5) During the millenium, they believe, the people of earth will initially be persuaded by force (the church quotes Revelation 12:5: Christ will "rule all nations with a ROD OF IRON"), and after that people will be reeducated to accept a better way. The coming world order, they believe, arises from a program of re-education. "Christ is now in the process of preparing an adequate TEACHING STAFF" through the ministry of the Radio Church of God, and a full knowledge of the gospel is being revealed only in this last generation.⁵

Before setting forth what we think is the correct Biblical view of the millennial age, we call attention to Radio Church of God teaching on the use of force, under No. 2 above. A favorite proof text used by H. W. Armstrong in this connection is Revelation 12:5: "And she brought forth a man-child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron."

This is said to presage a dictatorship by Christ and the righteous. But what is the Scriptural meaning of "rule . . . with a rod of iron"? Is it the idea of control and conversion by a combination of education and force, until the nations accept the teachings now presented by the Radio Church of God, in order that the era of plush living may ensue? Note Biblical uses of the phrase "rod of iron" as indicating punishment or destruction, not education for plush living:

Revelation 2:27. "And He shall rule them with a rod of iron; as the vessels of a potter shall they be broken to shivers."

Revelation 19:15. "And out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, that with it He should smite the nations: and He shall rule them with a rod of iron: and He treadeth the winepress of the fierceness and wrath of Almighty God."

Psalms 2:9. "Thou shalt break them with a rod of iron; thou shalt dash them in pieces like a potter's vessel."

It is difficult to see how anyone can imagine that Christ with a rod of iron converts people to His millennial rule and His will, when the Bible pictures things otherwise. Let the reader note the view of this world just prior to the second coming of Christ, as presented in Luke 17:26-31. The world is steeped in wickedness, and Christ comes to judge the wicked and to deliver the righteous. In Matthew 21:44 the kingdom of God comes to grind the unrepentant wicked to powder. In Daniel 2:34, 35, 44 a stone smites the image representing this world and breaks the nations in pieces for their rebellious wickedness.

This setting does not provide for the kind of near universalism that is taught by the Radio Church of God.

Rather, it provides for judgment upon sin and sinners who have refused God's grace during this present probationary life, and redemption for the righteous for whom the new heavens and new earth are created by God.

Few Direct Biblical References to the Millennium

The millennial age has always been a happy hunting ground for people given to strange ideas and fanciful interpretations of Scripture. The Bible nowhere gives a picture of the millennium in complete chronological sequence, nor does it specify the *locale* of some of the millennial events. We can only deal with salient features in the tenor of Scripture, and leave to God the details of unfulfilled prophecy. Otherwise we shall produce views as fanciful as some found in apocryphal literature on the subject, such as the lost writings of Papias, partly reproduced by Irenaeus and quoted by Eusebius; or we may wander into the fantasies of millennial ideas which we find in some current writings.

The thousand-year period indicated by the word "millennium" is mentioned specifically only in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, where the context states: "And I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit, and shut him up, and set a seal upon him, that he should deceive the nations no more, till the thousand years should be fulfilled: and after that he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:1-3.

The next verse indicates that "judgment was given unto them." The identity of "them" in this verse is strongly suggested by the expression "and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus . . . ; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years." Verse 4. Or "them" could be a collective pronoun used here to designate all the righteous dead.

Two questions arise at this point. First, is this millen-

nial reign on earth or in heaven? (The Radio Church of God teaches that it is on the earth.) Second, what is the purpose of, and who will participate in, this millennial reign?

Pivotal Points of the Millennium

Since the word "millennium" is not found in the Bible, and the term "thousand years"—speaking of the prophetic millennial period—occurs only in one part of the Bible, the Bible interpreter must be sure that his description of a millennial reign conforms to the facts given in Revelation, chapters 19 and 20, which have every appearance of a continuous narrative.

In Revelation 20:4 a group which includes resurrected martyrs is brought to view. They "were beheaded for the witness of Jesus," and "they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years."

Another group is seen in verse 5: "But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished."

The wording of this sequence places a resurrection at the beginning, and a resurrection at the end of the thousand years. Verse 6 speaks of "the first resurrection" as including these martyrs: "Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

1 Thessalonians 4:16 makes clear that this first resurrection of the righteous dead marks the beginning of the millennial period: "For the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first." (Compare also 1 Corinthians 15:23.)

Our Lord spoke of two resurrections, one called "the resurrection of life," and the other "the resurrection of damnation": "Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation." John 5:28, 29.

These two resurrections come a thousand years apart, according to Revelation 20:5.

The picture seems to be clear that the millennial reign of Christ and His resurrected saints begins with His second coming, and that it ends with the resurrection of the wicked: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." Revelation 20:5.

Thus Scripture establishes two chief pivotal events in this millennial reign. It also indicates that during the millennium all the wicked are dead, many of them having been slain by the glory of the second advent. Jesus spoke of this destruction in Luke 17:26-30, where the expression "destroyed them all" occurs twice: And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of man. They did eat, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and the Flood came, and *destroyed them all*. Likewise also as it was in the days of Lot; they did eat, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they builded; but the same day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven, and *destroyed them all*. Even thus shall it be in the day when the Son of man is revealed."

Our Lord here compares the destruction of all the wicked at the Flood to the total destruction of the wicked at His second coming. The salvation of the righteous and the destruction of the unrighteous are coupled together in the eschatology of both the Old and New Testaments. Note the following from Isaiah and from Paul:

"And it shall be said in that day, Lo, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for Him, we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation." Isaiah 25:9.

"For, behold, the Lord will come with fire, and with His chariots like a whirlwind, to render His anger with fury, and His rebuke with flames of fire. For by fire and by His sword will the Lord plead with all flesh: and the slain of the Lord shall be many." Isaiah 66:15, 16.

"The Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

The student who seeks to let Scripture interpret itself will ask what the Bible means by the expression "rule all nations with a rod of iron" (see No. 5 in first paragraph of this chapter), and will find the answer in Revelation 2:27; 19:15, 21; and Psalm 2:9. It equates "ruling with a rod of iron" with destruction of the nations, an eschatological view in harmony with Daniel 2:34, 35, 44, 45, and Matthew 21:44.

However much modernism seeks to destroy the eschatological promises of Scripture, it remains clear that Christ and His immediate disciples believed implicitly that a cataclysmic event would terminate human history, an event dominated by the personal, glorious appearing of the "King of kings" who is to save His people and judge the impenitent.

For instance, note the forthright declaration of two heavenly beings to the disciples at Christ's ascension: "This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen Him go into heaven." Acts 1:11.

The earliest believers linked this promised coming with Christ's previous declaration recorded in Mark's Gospel, which Jesus Himself placed in the context of physical glory: "And then shall they see the Son of man coming in the clouds with great power and glory." Mark 13:26.

This concept of a personal, glorious return is embodied in John's vision of the judgment scene in Revelation 19:11-21, where the "King of kings, and Lord of lords" appears in the battle of the great day of God Almighty. Verses 19-21 give a clear picture of destruction for the wicked, and no suggestion of a later chance appears in the Scriptures.

The ascension of the saints is an integral part of this picture: "the Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17. (Compare John 14:1-3; Revelation 20:4.)

For what purpose is this ascension, and to what place, are questions for which partial explanations can be found in the Word of God.

The earth during the thousand years cannot be the millennial utopia, if we consider these events:

1. The unrighteous are slain. Revelation 19:20, 21; 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9.

2. Satan's work comes to a halt without sinners to tempt, and thus he is "bound" or impotent during this thousand-year period. Revelation 20:2.

3. The earth becomes like "a bottomless pit" to the wicked one. Revelation 20:3. He is "shut up" and sealed in the sense that nothing but a desolate, unpopulated world is left to him during this period. This is the condition portrayed by the prophet: "The Lord shall roar from on high, and utter His voice from His holy habitation; He shall mightily roar upon His habitation; He shall give a shout, as they that tread the grapes, against all the inhabitants of the earth. A noise shall come even to the ends of the earth; for the Lord hath controversy with the nations, He will plead with all flesh; He will give them that are wicked to the sword, saith the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts, Behold, evil shall go forth from nation to nation, and a great whirlwind shall be raised up from the coasts of the earth. And the slain of the Lord shall be at that day from one end of the earth even unto the other end of the earth: they shall not be lamented, neither gathered, nor buried; they shall be dung upon the ground." Jeremiah 25:30-33.

This account presents a picture of a world denuded of

human beings, a desolate and dismal "bottomless pit" for Satan's contemplation. John, in another place, pictures the destructive events of the second advent as a vast physical upheaval affecting the whole earth. Revelation 6:14.

Garner Ted Armstrong, in a letter⁶ to *The Plain Truth* readers, refers to Isaiah 24:6 and argues that the last words of this verse prove that the earth is *not* depopulated during the millennium. The verse reads: "Therefore hath the curse devoured the earth, and they that dwell therein are desolate: therefore the inhabitants of the earth are burned, and *few men left.*"

But we must point out: If we use Isaiah 24 in reference to the thousand years after the second advent, we shall also have to consider verses 1 and 3: "Behold, the Lord maketh the earth empty, and maketh it waste."

"The land shall be utterly emptied."

We cannot avoid the possibility that the words "few men left" in Isaiah 24:6 may well refer to the righteous remnant after the destruction of the wicked.

Events During the Thousand Years

At Christ's ascension angels told the disciples that Jesus was "taken up from you into heaven." Acts 1:11. This phrase "into heaven" is confirmed in Acts 3:21; 7:56; Hebrews 8:1; 9:24. In these texts similar terms are used to designate the place to which Jesus ascended. Therefore "heaven" must be the place Christ had in mind when He told His disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." John 14:2, 3.

This surely is the place to which Jesus referred when He said to Peter: "Whither I go, thou canst not follow Me now; but thou shalt follow Me afterwards." John 13:36.

At the second coming God's saints are "caught up . . . to meet the Lord in the air" (1 Thessalonians 4:17), and are at this time given immortality. 1 Corinthians 15:51, 52.

At this point we have an empty, desolated earth which is the final result of wickedness—the locale to which the author of evil is confined during the millennial period. Jeremiah commented on a desolated earth: “I beheld, and, lo, there was no man. . . . The fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the Lord, and by His fierce anger.” Jeremiah 4:25, 26.

The scene from all these Scriptures is of a world in ruin and devastation as the result of God’s intervention, the beginning of His judgments upon evil, the binding of Satan by his confinement in the barren world of death which his wickedness has brought about and which he knows is now near to a fearful end.

Meanwhile the resurrected and living saints are with Christ in heaven. “They lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.” Revelation 20:4. The facts that all unrepentant sinners are destroyed on the earth at Christ’s second coming, and that the earth is reduced to chaos, would indicate that the redeemed must spend this temporary millennial period elsewhere, prior to the eternal “reign on the earth.” Revelation 5:10.

This period is shown in Revelation 20:4 to be spent with Christ: “And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshiped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.”

The apostle Paul declared: “Do ye not know the saints shall judge the world? . . . Know ye not that we shall judge angels?” 1 Corinthians 6:2, 3.

The millennial reign with Christ is at least initially spent in a judgment that seems essential in view of the fearful results of sin, so often incomprehensible to mortal minds. The man who today remains unmoved, not bewildered and

deeply troubled by all the agonies and cruelties of wickedness in the world of men, is out of touch with life. God evidently needs to allow His people to see the consequences of sin in their true light. During the millennial period He doubtless gives the saints understanding and prepares them to witness the final judgment which will eradicate sin and sinners from the world. Without this enlightenment the final execution of judgment would probably be as incomprehensible to the redeemed as the long, terrible story of sin has been to mortal minds on this earth.

Doubtless the mysteries of the past, the sufferings of the present, and the true record of human actions, recorded in some way unknown to us, will be used to confirm to the universe that there was no other way to save men than God's plan of salvation by grace through faith. This examination of records will justify the ways of God before mankind, and the extermination of Satan and sinners will be understood in a way that will ensure eternal good for the whole of God's creation.

"I beheld till the thrones were cast down, and the Ancient of Days did sit, whose garment was white as snow, and the hair of His head like pure wool: His throne was like the fiery flame, and His wheels as burning fire. A fiery stream issued and came forth from before Him: thousand thousands ministered unto Him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stood before Him: the judgment was set, and the books were opened." Daniel 7:9, 10.

This passage of Scripture portrays an investigation of the whole story of sin from beginning to end, so that redeemed men, chosen to live forever in a world to be recreated in sinless beauty (Revelation 21:1, 2), will never again question God's goodness, nor will they ever fall into the evil that has for ages afflicted mankind.

Events at the End of the Thousand Years

Following this examination of human history, and whatever other unknown events God may have in store for the

elect during the thousand-year period, the most dramatic events of the ages will transpire.

"After that [the "binding" of Satan] he must be loosed a little season." Revelation 20:3.

If the binding of Satan is to be the removal of his subjects—the wicked—the loosing will naturally be their reappearance in the resurrection of Revelation 20:5, at the close of the thousand years: "The rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished." "And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth." Revelation 20:5, 7, 8.

Here mysterious events remain hidden from our eyes, but the Word declares that Satan will rally the resurrected wicked to attack the Holy City, which descends from heaven (Revelation 21:2), and such monumental madness is ended by the execution of judgment upon Satan and his crazed cohorts. The nature and duration of this terrible event God has mercifully withheld from us.

"And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them." Revelation 20:9.

The Bible calls this final annihilation of evil "the second death," which only the "blessed and holy" who rise in the "first resurrection" will escape. Revelation 20:6, 14. This fire will purify the earth, and then God by His word will make the earth new (Revelation 21:1), to become the eternal abode of the blessed. Revelation 21:2-4. Compare Isaiah 65:17-19, 25.

When John spoke of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Revelation 21:1), he used the word *kainos* for "new," suggesting a creation from the elements of the old earth, rather than from nothing. This phrase, a comprehensive one, includes the whole "promise" of God to end the long night of sin and establish "new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness." 2 Peter 3:13. Fulfillment comes

by a cataclysmic judgment of God (2 Peter 3:10), and not by the conversion of the world.

The above events make sense only if man's probation occurs in this life. They would be meaningless if God's offer of salvation extends until after the second advent, or during the millennium.

One Offer of Salvation

It is a basic teaching of Scripture that man's time of probation lasts only as long as he lives, and that beyond this lies the great judgment, with no second chance of salvation.

Paul exhorted early Christian believers to cease harsh judgments upon each other—"For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." Romans 14:10.

"Every one of us," continued the apostle, "shall give account of himself to God." The whole context conveys the idea that such a judgment occurs at the end of mankind's earthly existence.

The same apostle spoke to the Athenians about man's search for God, who is "not far from every one of us." The times of ignorance are gone, he asserted, and at once added: "But now commandeth all men everywhere to repent: because He hath appointed a day, in the which He will judge the world in righteousness by that Man whom He hath ordained; whereof He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." Acts 17:30, 31.

This is the day in which God will deliver the godly, but He has reserved "the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished." 2 Peter 2:9.

The angels who followed Lucifer in rebellion are "reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." Jude 6.

Because this present life is probationary, God urges sinners: "Behold, *now* is the day of salvation." 2 Corinthians 6:2. Thus Paul interpreted the message of Isaiah 49:8, here referred to.

The message of *one* probationary offer of salvation figured prominently in the teaching of our Lord, as may be seen in Matthew 13:37-43; 25:1-13; Luke 16:19-31; et cetera.

When our Lord said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3), He did not point Nicodemus to a faraway event, but to the need for immediate decision in this life.

Paul said, "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. Here he certainly spoke of a new life now. "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself" definitely applies to Christ during the incarnation, because this was the basis on which the believers were to be "ambassadors for Christ" offering this same reconciliation to the world. 2 Corinthians 5:19, 20.

Our Lord taught responsibility for accepting or rejecting salvation in this life when He spoke to the disciples regarding sin in John 15:22: "If I had not come and spoken unto them, they had not had sin: but now they have no cloak for their sin."

This passage shows clearly: (1) that men are not counted sinners if they are ignorant of truth, in contradistinction to Mr. Armstrong's belief that so many "never had a chance"; and (2) that the truths of the gospel are for men to accept or reject now, in *this life*, not later in the millennium, when it will be too late.

REFERENCES

1. Herman L. Hoeh, "The Coming Utopia, Wonderful World of Tomorrow," page 1.
2. *Ibid.*
3. See H. W. Armstrong, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*.
4. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 5, pages 9-15; Test 2, page 20.
5. Roderick C. Meredith, "The Inside Story of the World Tomorrow Broadcast," pages 10-12.
6. "A Personal Letter From Garner Ted Armstrong," November 24, 1967, page 3.

6.

Teachings Concerning the Godhead

Is the Trinity a pagan myth? Is the Holy Spirit a force and not a Person? Is the Son subordinate to the Father? Was Melchizedek Christ?

The Trinity

The Radio Church of God teaches that the doctrine of the Trinity is a pagan idea, and that the Holy Spirit is really the influence, the power, and the love of God, but *not* a Person and therefore not the Third Person of the Deity. This belief follows the teaching of the Jehovah's Witnesses, whose views on retribution, a second chance, and the non-bodily resurrection of Jesus are also taught by the Radio Church of God.

Scriptural References to the Trinity and the Holy Spirit

The word "trinity" does not occur in the Bible, nor do many of the terms Christians use to describe the trinitarian doctrine, such as "three in one," three Persons in one God," et cetera. But the absence of a specifically phrased formula does not negate the truth which, as has often been stated, is latent in the Old Testament and patent in the New. In any case, the nature of the Godhead defies description in human language.

It is not denied that triads of "gods" occurred in various polytheistic religions, such as the Egyptian Isis, Osiris, and Horus, but they differed markedly from the Christian Trin-

ity, as B. B. Warfield has pointed out. "It should be needless to say that none of these triads has the slightest resemblance to the Christian doctrine of the Trinity. The Christian doctrine of the Trinity embodies much more than the notion of 'threeness,' and beyond their 'threeness' these triads have nothing in common with it."¹

The following points about the Holy Spirit support the belief that He is the Third Person of the Godhead:

1. *The names of Deity are applied in Scripture to the Holy Spirit.*

Genesis 1:2—"The Spirit of God [Elohim] moved—"

2 Chronicles 15:1—"The Spirit of God [Elohim] came upon—"

Judges 3:10; 6:34—"The Spirit of the Lord [Yahweh] came upon—"

Isaiah 61:1—"The Spirit of the Lord God [Adonai Yahweh]—"

2 Corinthians 3:18—"By the Spirit of the Lord [margin, "The Lord the Spirit"]—"

2. *He does the works of Deity.*

Job 33:4—"The Spirit of God hath made me."

Psalms 104:30—"Thou sendest forth Thy Spirit, they are created."

1 Corinthians 12:7-10, 28—Performs miracles.

2 Peter 1:20, 21—Inspires prophets.

See also John 3:34; Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13.

3. *He is addressed by personal pronouns.*

John 16:7—"I will send Him."

John 14:26; 15:26; 16:8, 13, 14—"He."

John 16:13—"Himself."

4. *He speaks and prophesies as a Person.*

Acts 13:2-4—"The Holy Ghost said—" "Sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

Acts 21:11—The prophet Agabus said, "Thus saith the Holy Ghost—"

In Acts 5:3 Ananias is said to have lied to the Holy Ghost, and in verse 4 Peter says this lie was "unto God."

This evidence of the Deity of the Holy Spirit is strengthened by His presence at the incarnation of Christ (Luke 1:35), at the baptism of Jesus (Matthew 3:16, 17), and at the resurrection of Jesus (1 Peter 3:18).

When "the heaven was opened," at the baptism of Jesus, "the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven, which said, Thou art My beloved Son; in Thee I am well pleased." Luke 3:21, 22. This account strongly supports the view that the Holy Spirit possesses distinct individuality apart from Christ and God—a view expressed thus by E. H. Bickersteth: "We are compelled to say, that the descending Spirit is distinct from the baptized Saviour, and from the approving Father."²

Some eighty-eight direct references to the Holy Spirit may be found in the Old Testament, some of which present evidence regarding His nature and work. For instance, the Spirit of God is associated with creation: Genesis 1:2; Job 26:13. He moves among men: Genesis 6:3. He appears in acts of divine providence: Psalm 104:29, 30; Isaiah 40:7, 8. Men are directed by the Spirit of God in intellectual and artistic pursuits: Exodus 35:30, 31. Intervening acts of the Holy Spirit characterize the theocracy, as clearly seen in the time of wilderness wandering, during the period of the judges, through the prophets, et cetera: Numbers 24:2; Judges 6:34; Micah 3:8.

Some of the relevant Old Testament passages may appear to be explained on the basis that the Holy Spirit is God's power, force, or influence, rather than personality, but the cumulative picture, by the time we reach the New Testament, portrays the Spirit as a personality and, finally, as the executive of the Godhead among men.

Every book in the New Testament mentions the Holy Spirit with the exception of the short letter to Philemon and the second and third epistles of John. Paul's epistles contain almost 120 references. Before the doctrine of the Trinity was formulated, the Holy Spirit had become a dynamic personal experience among the believers. To read

the New Testament through in long passages at a sitting leads one to the conclusion expressed in James Denney's famous words: "To the men who wrote the NT and to those for whom they wrote, the Spirit was not a doctrine but an experience. . . . In some sense this covered everything that they included in Christianity."³

A wealth of further presumptive evidence of personality for the Holy Spirit abounds in the New Testament, and the reader should provide himself with one of the many available more complete studies on the subject of the Trinity, which space does not permit us to undertake here. We should bear in mind that the nature of the Godhead remains an insoluble mystery to the human mind, and only in revelation can we find enlightenment on the subject. Even in this area our study must be reverently cautious.

The Ministry of the Holy Spirit

Here is a summary of H. W. Armstrong's teachings on the subject of the Holy Spirit's ministry:

1. He teaches that Adam and Eve did not eat "of the tree in the Garden of Eden that represented God's *Holy Spirit*—the 'tree of [eternal] life.'"⁴ They chose instead the tree of knowledge.

2. He believes that "Israel was a physical, *carnal* church! (Acts 7:38). They . . . *did not possess* God's Holy Spirit! It was *not available* to them since there was *no promise of receiving the Holy Spirit at that time!* (John 7:39). From the time of Adam, God was letting man see the effects of living *without* the Holy Spirit!"⁵

3. Armstrong teaches that the Holy Spirit "was not generally available to mankind *before* Christ's death and ascension to heaven."⁶

4. The first arrival of the Holy Spirit among men is said to be announced in Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4, and fulfilled in Acts 2:2-4, 8, 11. Pentecost "heralded to the whole world the *beginning* of the time when all who would thirst for the Holy Spirit *can* receive it." This Pentecost

experience was "*UNIQUE* in all history—*never again* to be repeated!" Creation, he asserts, constituted the first phase of God's plan to prepare a perfect man. At creation he was *physically* perfect; but his rebellion left the world cut off from the Holy Spirit until the Day of Pentecost. At Pentecost the second phase began—the creation of spiritual perfection. "We are then, *impregnated*, so to speak, by the 'seed' or germ of eternal life."⁷

Comments on the Above Points

The Radio Church of God cites no Scripture to prove that the tree of life "represented God's Holy Spirit," because none exists. On the other hand, enough information may be found in Scripture about the Holy Spirit to make arbitrary interpretations like this unnecessary. Also, the Genesis record of the tree of life admits of no exegetic identification of that tree with the Holy Spirit.

Regarding point No. 2: When we read in John 7:39 (RSV) "For as yet the Spirit had not been given," we are reading of a promised fullness of the Spirit to launch the Christian church in the world—a promise made in the Old Testament (Joel 2:28, 29) and in the New (Luke 24:49; Acts 1:8) and fulfilled at Pentecost (Acts 2).

But the Holy Spirit was certainly with men before Pentecost and before Christ's death and ascension, as we have seen. How else could we explain the existence of godly people waiting for "the consolation of Israel," such as Mary and Joseph (see Matthew 1; Luke 1:35), Elizabeth and Zacharias (Luke 1), Simeon (Luke 2:25), and many others? How else shall we explain the miracles and the mighty teaching and preaching of Jesus (see Luke 4:14, 18)? Thousands were stirred by Him in Galilee and Samaria by the Holy Spirit, and a harvest was later reaped by the apostles.

From the beginning, God's purposes were fulfilled through Spirit-filled men such as Bezaleel (Exodus 31:1-5; 35:30-34), Joshua (Numbers 27:18), Jephthah (Judges

11:29), David (1 Samuel 16:13), Elijah and Elisha (2 Kings 2:15), Zechariah (2 Chronicles 24:20), and hosts of others.

Therefore, on point No. 4, the fulfillment of Luke 24:49 and Acts 1:4 could not have been "the first arrival of the Holy Spirit," but rather a Pentecostal outpouring that was to astound men and awaken their hearts in a new and mightier way.

The Nature of Christ

On the position and person of Christ:

1. The Radio Church of God teaches that Christ is subordinate in authority to the Father,⁸ but "He is the God of Israel."⁹ (This, however, does not mean the same as other Christians mean by the term "very God." See under No. 4 below.)

2. It teaches that He was a human being on earth with all the weaknesses and lusts common to other men, and He had sinful flesh: "Yes, Jesus had *sinful* flesh—human nature. But by exercising the *will* to always obey God, and by receiving the extra help He needed to *master* His fleshly desires, Jesus *repudiated* the sway of sin in the human flesh and showed that the law of God *could be kept*."¹⁰

3. It teaches that "Jesus *alone*, of all humans, has so far been SAVED!"¹¹ This was accomplished through His resurrection. Romans 1:4.¹²

4. It teaches that He died a physical death, and "*at His resurrection* He was *born* AGAIN . . . *into* the SPIRIT FAMILY of GOD with a SPIRITUAL BODY!"¹³ (1 Corinthians 15:44, 45 is used as proof.) It believes that He "was made immortal and very God through a resurrection to eternal life."¹⁴ In this connection 1 Timothy 1:17 ("Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God, be honor") is said to refer to Christ after His resurrection.

5. It teaches that He was begotten of God by the incarnation—the Father-Son relationship began when "Jesus

was begotten within His human mother Mary.”¹⁵ He was not the *Son* of God until the incarnation, which is said to be the reason why the terms “Ancient of Days” and “One *like* the Son” are used by the prophet Daniel, instead of “Father” and “Son.”¹⁶

Comments on the Above

Item No. I raises the old question of the inferiority of the Son to the Father and, in fact, the whole question of Christ's eternal preexistence. On our Lord's preincarnate existence as God, certain Scriptures must be kept in mind:

“Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.” Philippians 2:6.

“And the Word was God.” John 1:1.

“I and My Father are one.” John 10:30.

In Romans 1:7 the apostle Paul sends to the church a blessing from “God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.” The same expression occurs in 1 Thessalonians 1:1; Ephesians 1:2. This clearly is a compound phrase known among the early Christians as expressing their view of the equality or oneness of these two Persons of the Godhead. B. B. Warfield comments: “And in this Christian paraphrasis for ‘God,’ the name of Jesus Christ takes no subordinate place.”¹⁷

There are some Scripture statements in this connection that are puzzling if taken in isolation, such as:

1 Corinthians 11:3—“the head of Christ is God.”

John 14:28—“My Father is greater than I.”

John 5:30—“I can of Mine own self do nothing.” (Compare verse 19.)

However, a context must be established on the basis that our Lord was a divine Being, as seen in such texts as:

Isaiah 7:14—“And shall call His name Immanuel” (lit., “with us God”). This text is applied in Matthew 1:23 as follows: “And they shall call His name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.”

Hebrews 1:8, 9—“But unto the Son He saith, Thy

throne, O God, is forever and ever: a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." These words are an application of Psalm 45:6, 7 to Christ.

John 1:1, 14—"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

See also John 5:18; 10:33; 20:28; Acts 20:28.

In view of this general tenor of the Scriptures, we must apply Christ's statement in John 14:28 ("My Father is greater than I") to the period of His life on earth. His post-crucifixion status is seen in the words "God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name." Philippians 2:9.

When it is said (No. 2 above) that Christ had all the lusts of human nature, we need care to avoid being precipitated into endless controversy regarding the mysterious divine-human nature of Christ. He was human in that He could be tempted, and He did suffer. But was He lustful? Did He have sinful human nature? If so, would He not be under the condemnation of His own words in Matthew 5:28, where even a lustful thought is condemned?

Again, was Christ saved, or born again, through His resurrection (Nos. 3 and 4 above)? Or was He thereby *revealed* as divine, or "*declared* to be the Son of God with power, . . . by the resurrection from the dead"? Romans 1:4.

The clear meaning of the new birth as expounded to Nicodemus by Jesus involves a complete transformation of life through the power of the Holy Spirit (a change not necessary for the sinless Christ), as opposed to the Radio Church of God idea that ties it to the resurrection. The proof text offered (1 Corinthians 15:44, 45) deals with

the general resurrection of the dead at Christ's coming, not with the special resurrection of our Lord.

The new birth involves baptism, to signify repentance and remission of sins (John 3:5), which was taught by John and accepted by Jesus only to set an example in the fulfillment of all righteousness (Matthew 3:15). To be "born again" is to be "born from above," "to be born of water and of the Spirit"; it is to accept God as Father and Jesus as Saviour, to live by grace, and to be victorious over sin. Compare John 3:1-3 and Romans 6:2-16. Christ contrasted it with "born of the flesh" in John 3:6, and likened it to the invisible wind which nevertheless can be felt and which moves and accomplishes things. Verse 8.

The new birth is a renewal in this life: "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Ephesians 2:1. Our Lord's "new birth" teaching in John 3 formed an introduction to His statement on redeeming love—"Whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Belief in Him, following Him, obeying Him in this life—this is the new birth. Scripture does not indicate a delay of the new birth until the moment of immortality, as taught by the Radio Church of God.

The incarnation of Christ (No. 5 above) introduces "the mystery of godliness" (1 Timothy 3:16), on which no one has the last word, and on which human rationalization is futile. In Scripture we find such expressions as the "only-begotten Son" (John 3:16), "the firstborn from the dead" (Colossians 1:18), "the Firstborn of every creature" (Colossians 1:15), "the First begotten of the dead" (Revelation 1:5), "First begotten" (Hebrews 1:6); and they all refer to Christ. He was the first in importance. But these and similar expressions do not always appear in the same context or with the same meanings.

The words "this day have I begotten Thee" (Psalm 2:7) are understood by many—in the light of Acts 13:33, which refers to the raising of Jesus by the Father—to refer to the resurrection. But whether we apply them to the

resurrection or to the incarnation, it remains certainly true that neither at Mary's conception nor at His resurrection was Christ "born again." To speak of "begetting" when we accept Christ, and of being "born again" at the resurrection, is a novelty of Herbert Armstrong's, not taught in Scripture.

The Melchizedek Mystery

The Radio Church of God identifies Christ with Melchizedek of the Old Testament. It is necessary, therefore, to state these teachings briefly and then to review what the Bible says about both Christ and Melchizedek.

1. The Radio Church of God says that Melchizedek "*had* to be one of the Godhead." He was "*to remain always* (abide . . . continually) *a priest*" (Hebrews 7:3), and therefore "*Christ was Melchizedek*, the High Priest of the Father *in* Old Testament times."¹⁸

2. It teaches that Melchizedek was "the God of the Old Testament who became Christ," who spoke "*personally* . . . to Adam and Eve." The fact that Melchizedek is called "king of righteousness" (Hebrews 7:2) is said to prove his deity, because "*only God* is completely righteous."¹⁹

3. It believes that Melchizedek was also "King of Salem" and, since *Jerusalem* means "city of peace," we have the "'King of Peace' ruling over Jerusalem, the 'City of Peace' as the High Priest of the Father."²⁰

4. It teaches that Melchizedek as a ministering priest taught God's laws, including the law of the tithe, to men from the creation through Abraham and Moses, and when the Levitical system was established, he left God's ministry to appointed men, and withdrew into the background—to reappear as Christ in the New Testament.²¹

Comments on Melchizedek

All kinds of theories have been advanced over the years as to the identity of the mysterious Melchizedek, and this one by the Radio Church of God is one of them. Some students regard Melchizedek as a fictitious character portraying

an ideal king of Israel, but his appearance in Genesis 14 in a historical context forbids acceptance of this idea.

The Scriptures certainly tell us that Melchizedek was "King of Salem" and "priest of the most high God" (Genesis 14:18); that he was a type of Christ, who united in himself the offices of king and priest. Psalm 110:2-4; Hebrews 6:20 to 7:2. It is also stated that Melchizedek was "without father, without mother, without descent" (Hebrews 7:3), which could mean of unknown or unrecorded genealogy. He is spoken of in Hebrews 7:4 as a man: "Now consider how great this man was." But there is no positive identification of Melchizedek as Christ in the Scriptures. The idea that Melchizedek was "the God of the Old Testament, who became Christ," is subjective thinking, and the proofs offered by the Radio Church of God fall far short of being conclusive.

REFERENCES

1. B. B. Warfield, *Biblical and Theological Studies*, page 23.
2. E. H. Bickersteth, *The Trinity*, page 120.
3. James Hastings, ed., *Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels*, Vol. 1, p. 731.
4. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 20, page 7.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
6. *Ibid.*
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 10-12.
8. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 9, page 6.
9. H. W. Armstrong, "Is Jesus God?" page 6.
10. *The Plain Truth*, November, 1963, page 12.
11. H. W. Armstrong, "Why Were You Born?" page 12.
12. "Just What Do You Mean, Born Again?" pages 13, 15.
13. C. P. Meredith, "What Will You Be Like in the Resurrection?" page 1.
14. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 14, page 13.
15. *Ibid.*, Lesson 9, p. 6.
16. *Ibid.*, Lesson 5, p. 6.
17. Warfield, *op. cit.*, p. 61.
18. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 7, page 8. See also H. W. Armstrong, *The Mystery of Melchizedek; Who Was Melchizedek?*
19. *Ibid.*
20. *Ibid.*
21. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.

7.

Anglo-American-Israel Theory

What is Anglo-Israelism? Is the true history of Israel shrouded in mystery?

The Radio Church of God has accepted a theory known for over a century as "British Israelism." Basically, it propounds the belief that some of the races of northern Europe and North America descended from the ten "lost" tribes of Israel.

In 1823 in Britain a certain Dr. Abadie became an early advocate of this theory. Another was an eccentric British naval officer, Richard Brothers (1757-1824), who wrote fifteen volumes on the subject, called himself "the Nephew of the Almighty," and predicted that he would appear as the "Prince of the Hebrews" on November 19, 1795. He arrogated to himself all the titles assigned to Christ, including "King of kings." In July, 1795, he was committed to an insane asylum, after demanding that King George III surrender the crown to him, and he died in obscure poverty in 1824.

Subsequently a certain John Wilson introduced some variations of British-Israelism in a book called *Our Israelitish Origin*, which was followed by F. R. A. Glover's *England and the Remnant of Judah*. Then one C. P. Smith, Astronomer Royal of Scotland, injected the idea that the measurement of the Great Pyramid had some prophetic significance in the prosperity of the English nations. In 1871 the indefatigable Edward Hine, in his book *Identification of the*

British Nation With Lost Israel produced three hundred reasons for identifying the British Peoples with "lost" Israel. Some of his reasons look puerile and irrelevant today, and time has proved many others totally inaccurate. The militant Edward Hine identified himself as the "Deliverer out of Zion."

British-Israel ideas abounded among the religionists of North American frontier days. Leading men and preachers such as William Penn (1644-1718), Roger Williams (1603?-1683), Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758), Cotton Mather (1663-1728) embraced them. Joseph Smith (1805-1844), the Mormon leader, believed and taught them, adding certain embellishments rampant along the Eastern seaboard. Joseph Smith did not originate the idea that the North American Indians came of Israelite origin, for Josiah Priest wrote in 1833: "The opinion that the American Indians are descendants of the Lost Ten Tribes is now a popular one and generally believed."¹

A basic idea in the Radio Church of God teachings on British-Israelism concerns the Abrahamic covenant of Genesis 12:1-3, which is said to be a promise with a "twofold nature." This church claims that the promise to make "a great nation" from Abraham's literal descendants is "a promise of race," and that the words "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" constitute a "spiritual promise of GRACE."² The *race* part of the promise (to make Abraham the father of many nations) is said to have been conditional up to the time Abraham offered his son Isaac, but from that point onward "it became UNCONDITIONAL."³

The Comments on This Idea

To most Christians, *race* in the plan of salvation always plays a part subservient to divine grace. No man becomes God's favorite because of racial origin. Any person, regardless of nationality, may receive present salvation from sin, with hope of future immortal life, because of his sub-

mission to redeeming grace—which is the basis of the eternal covenant in Christ Jesus. See Matthew 3:9; John 8:39; Romans 2:28, 29.

When God promised that Abraham would become "a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:3-9, 19, 21), the following factors were included:

1. A numerous progeny (verse 6)—"I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee."

2. An everlasting covenant, which would include the descendants of Abraham.

3. Descent for covenant purpose through Isaac.

Any doubt as to the meaning of God's covenant promises of grace is settled by Paul's inspired comment: "Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made. He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ." Galatians 3:16.

The Abrahamic covenant passed by descent from Isaac through King David down to Christ, as is seen in Peter's comment at Pentecost: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne." Acts 2:30.

All true Christian believers become heirs of the covenant promises to Abraham-David-Christ, for: "If ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise." Galatians 3:29.

"If we are members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the Kingdom of heaven, we have the highest place in God's purpose that it is possible to enjoy, whatever our ancestry. . . .

"It is the Church of God, not any kingdom of the world, that carries on through the Spirit the work of Christ; and the throne of David is that of Christ Himself. No ancestry can make us members of Him. But if we are His living members, for us national distinctions have little meaning. In Christ 'there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and

uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bondman, freeman; but Christ is all, and in all' ”⁴

The promise to Abraham of fathering many nations was fulfilled through the Semitic tribes and nations, such as the Arabic tribes through Ishmael (Genesis 21:13-18), the Midianites through Keturah (Genesis 25:1-4), and the Edomites through Esau (Genesis 36:1-19), besides the Israelites through Jacob.

In the wider and ultimate sense, this Abrahamic covenant included the innumerable spiritual progeny of Abraham through faith in Christ the Redeemer (Galatians 3:29)—a belief held by a majority of Christians. But the Radio Church of God rejects the view in favor of a literal fulfillment, not through the acknowledged literal Jews, but through the alleged descendants of the ten “lost” tribes, which they identify as the Anglo-American peoples, with certain northern European races included. Thus, in their scheme of things, race is placed above grace.

Two questions here call for answers: (1) Were the ten tribes, dispersed by the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities, to reappear later in certain northern European and North American nations? (2) Were Israel and Judah two separate nations, the term Judah alone meaning Jews, the two to remain distinct and separate to the end of time?

These teachings of H. W. Armstrong follow the lines of the old standard British-Israel teaching, as the following clearly shows:

“WHAT IS THE KEY TO BRITISH-ISRAEL TRUTH?”

“The differentiation between ‘Israel’ and ‘Judah,’ is clearly marked throughout the Scriptures (1 Kings 12; Jer. 3:6-11; Psa. 114:1, 2; Ezek. 37). They are not interchangeable terms.

“Israel—The ten-tribed Northern Kingdom or House of Israel, which kept the surname Israel.

“Judah—The two-tribed Southern Kingdom or House of Judah. Of this latter House only are ‘the Jews.’ Hence,

all Jews are Israelites, but all Israelites are not Jews. Jews was the name given to the men of Judah only. (2 Kings 16:1-6; Esther 2:5, 6.)”⁵

Ancient History of the Two Kingdoms

The ancient history of God's people involved here is not shrouded in mystery, for the Bible in 1 Kings 11:26-40; 12:16-21 clearly reveals what happened. Solomon fell into evil ways, and Jeroboam, “a mighty man of valor,” rebelled and led ten tribes in seceding to form the northern kingdom of Israel. This division, predicted in 1 Kings 11:30, 31, was precipitated by King Rehoboam's impulsive rejection of the counsel of the elders. 1 Kings 12:1-24; 2 Chronicles 10. In doing evil, Jeroboam set a proverbial mark to which succeeding evil kings were compared. 1 Kings 15:26; 16:2, 19, 26, et cetera. Two tribes (Judah and Benjamin) remained loyal to the house of David and became the southern kingdom. 2 Chronicles 11:12. This southern kingdom provided an asylum for the Levites, who declined to support the rebellious northern kingdom. Verse 13.

Beginning in King Jehoiakim's time (605/604 B.C.) Nebuchadnezzar carried out a series of deportations, carrying the better part of the population of Judah to Babylon, leaving behind only “the poor of the land to be vinedressers and husbandmen.” 2 Kings 25:12. The total destruction of Jerusalem came in 586 B.C. Earlier the Assyrians had meted out the same treatment to inhabitants of the northern kingdom (721 B.C.) and augmented the remnants by new populations consisting of Gentiles brought in from other lands. 2 Kings 17:6, 24.

That the Assyrian and Babylonian captivities did not make “a full end” of Israel as God's covenant people can be seen in such passages as Jeremiah 4:27; 3:18; 46:28; but their rejection as a theocracy became permanent and irrevocable when they refused to accept Jesus as Messiah. The whole of Stephen's address in Acts 7 supplies proof of this rejection, and verses 51 and 52 are specific on the point.

Compare these statements with the conditions stated in Jeremiah 12:14-17.

Nowhere, however, does Scripture speak of any of these twelve tribes of Israel as "the lost tribes," nor does any statement indicate they were ever lost.

The Bible speaks of what is called a "dispersion," from the Greek word *diaspora*, used in New Testament times of the Jewish communities scattered among the nations. Thus James addressed his epistle to "the twelve tribes scattered abroad." James 1:1. They were not "lost," but known and recognized as dispersed Jewish remnants of all the original tribes.

Paul speaks of "the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come." Acts 26:6, 7. These apostles apparently knew nothing of "lost" tribes.

Historically, the last direct mention of the deported population from the northern kingdom of Israel is found in 2 Kings 17:6, where Scripture states that the king of Assyria carried them "away into Assyria, and placed them in Halah and in Habor by the river Gozan, and in the cities of the Medes."

Remnants of all the twelve tribes continued to be recognized as such, thus rendering any mention of "lost" tribes inaccurate. The passage of centuries and the continued wanderings and sufferings of Jewish remnants, and particularly since the destruction of their temple and commonwealth by the Romans, did, of course, obliterate exact tribal descent so that no Jew today can claim specific and literal tribal lineage.

Who Were the Jews?

The Hebrew language used in the kingdom of Judah is referred to as the Jew's language. 2 Kings 18:26; Isaiah 36:11. The term "Jew" occurs first in the time of Jeremiah as a designation of a subject of the kingdom of Judah.

2 Kings 25:25; Jeremiah 32:12; 24:9.

The majority of the comparatively few Hebrew exiles who elected to return to Palestine were of the tribe of Judah, because the reestablishment concerned those who had been carried from Judah to Babylon some seventy years previously. However, *all* the tribes were involved in the decree of King Cyrus, as Ezra's report shows: "Who is there among you of all His people? his God be with him, and let him go up to Jerusalem, . . . and build the house of the Lord God of Israel." Ezra 1:3.

Thus the term "Jew" came to mean all the returned exiles in general, without regard to tribal descent. Ezra 4:12, 23; Nehemiah 1:2. It obviously included other tribes than Judah, for post-exilic "Judah" and "Israel" are addressed in restored Zion, or Jerusalem. See Zechariah 8:3-5, 13. The Jews who rebuilt the temple sacrificed twelve goats for the twelve tribes, which signifies "all Israel" as represented by some from each tribe. Ezra 6:14-17; 8:35.

One of the best smaller works on British-Israelism, written by a recognized Anglican scholar, has this to say regarding the distinctive names applied to Hebrew remnants after the return under Ezra and Nehemiah:

"From this time forward the great contrast lies, not between Judah and Israel, but between the Jews resident in the Holy Land and the vast multitudes of the 'Dispersion' in Babylon, Egypt, and in time throughout the Roman Empire. We know very little of Israel's history from the days of Ezra and Nehemiah to the days of the Maccabees; and far more of the exiles in Babylon may have returned to the Holy Land than those of whom we know. When Jerusalem and the Temple had been already restored, and a settled community established, it would not have required the same heroism to return as it had required in the early days. North Israelites may have rejoined the 'remnant' left in their old homes as well as Judaites. What is certain is this, and those who hold the British-Israel theory should clearly grasp it. In New Testament days the 'Jews,' though the term was originally

confined to Judaites only, are regarded as the living representatives not of Judah, Benjamin, and Levi alone, but of all the tribes. When S. James writes to 'the twelve tribes of the Dispersion,' he writes, unless he refers to the Church of Christ, to the whole body of the Israelite people. The language of S. Paul is even clearer. 'Now I stand here to be judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers; unto which promise our twelve tribes, earnestly serving God night and day, hope to attain.' The idea that ten of the twelve tribes, instead of still 'serving God night and day,' have long ago become a heathen people, and wandered away to the west, never appears to cross his mind."⁶

After the return from exile it is clear that only one Jewish nation, not two, existed in Palestine, and the prophet Zechariah refers to it collectively as "Judah, Israel, and Jerusalem." Zechariah 1:19. In Zechariah 8:13 the "house of Judah" and the "house of Israel" are addressed as one people. The book of Malachi refers to the Jews as Israel and Jacob, in contrast with Edom and Esau. Malachi 1:1-5.

We conclude from this evidence that the word "Jew" came to signify all people of the Hebrew race wherever they lived. Acts 2:8-11; 13:42; Romans 1:16. They were as a whole clearly distinguished from Gentiles, as these texts and many others show, and from the Samaritans. John 4:9.

Who Were Israelites?

"Israel" was the covenant name given to Jacob on his way home to Canaan after twenty years of exile in Haran. Genesis 32:22-32. The name "Jacob" had been bestowed as a natural family name, but the name "Israel" was bestowed by God as a character name resulting from the spiritual victory he experienced. (In the same way, God's people who are victorious over sin and sanctified in character under the new covenant will be given a new name. Revelation 2:17.)

The almost synonymous use of the two names shows up in such passages as Genesis 48:1-3, where the two appear

quite naturally in the narrative. Isaiah 44:1 provides another clear indication of the interchangeable use of these names: "Yet now hear, O Jacob My servant; and Israel, whom I have chosen."

The descendants of Jacob, whether as one contemporary group or as successive and collective generations, are referred to as "the children of Israel" (Genesis 32:32; Exodus 1:9; Hosea 3:5) or "congregation of Israel" (Exodus 12:3).

One of the great Hebrew scholars of the Christian church has this to say on the names "Judah," "Israel," "Jew," and "Israelite," in post-exilic days:

"With the captivity (Assyrian and Babylonian) the divisions and rivalry between 'Judah' and 'Israel' were ended, and the members of all the tribes who looked forward to a national future were conscious not only of one common destiny, but that that destiny was bound up with the promises to the house of David, and with Zion or Jerusalem as its center, in accordance with the prophecies of Joel, Amos, and Hosea, and of other inspired messengers. . . .

"The name of 'Jew' and 'Israelite' became synonymous terms from about the time of the Captivity. It is one of the absurd fallacies of Anglo-Israelism to presuppose that the term 'Jew' stands for a bodily descendant of 'Judah.' It stands for all those from among the sons of Jacob who acknowledge themselves, or were considered, subjects of the theocratic kingdom of Judah, which they expected to be established by the promised 'Son of David.'"⁷

Daniel the prophet, who was carried to Babylon in 605 B.C., uses the terms "Judah" and "Israel" in the beautiful prayer recorded in Daniel 9:7, 11, 20, and he obviously knew nothing about *the ten lost tribes* though he had remained in captivity many decades and was a highly placed court official.

Zechariah and Malachi, who ministered to the people returned to their homeland after the captivity, speak, in the one case, of "all the tribes of Israel," (Zechariah 9:1), and

in the other, of Israel and Judah in Jerusalem (Malachi 2:11). These were the last of the Old Testament prophets, and they found the people of Israel and Judah living together in Jerusalem as one people. If they knew of any lost tribes by then wandering northwards so that by the time of Christ they had reached northern Europe, as asserted by the Radio Church of God, surely these last prophets of the Old Testament would have mentioned the facts. But not a word is said by them beyond the casual mention of Judah and Israel living together as one people in one place, remnants of all the tribes returned home in God's providence.

It remains for us to study now the supposed wanderings of the tribes after the exile, the purported identifications of "lost" tribes among modern nations, and some of the philological and exegetical factors presented to us as evidence in these identifications.

REFERENCES

1. Quoted in Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, page 45.
2. H. W. Armstrong, "The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy" (25-page pamphlet), page 2.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 3.
4. L. H. Goudge, *The British-Israel Theory*, page v.
5. Leaflet by the Covenant Publishing Co., Ltd., 6 Buckingham Gate, London. Quoted in W. J. Young, "Anglo-Israelism," page 16.
6. Goudge, *op. cit.*, pp. 6, 7.
7. Dr. David Baron, *Letter to an Inquirer*, quoted in Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*, pages 298-300.

8.

Anglo-Israelism (Continued)

What types of reasoning are followed in British-Israelism? How does the reasoning compare with known facts?

The Post-Exilic Wanderings of the Tribes

Josephus, the pro-Roman Jewish historian, wrote a passage to impress people with the fact that "an immense multitude" of the "people of Israel" remained in Babylon; but he nowhere speaks of "lost" tribes, only of the "Dispersion."¹

British-Israel followers have made much of the supposition that the ten tribes left Babylon on a long year-and-a-half pilgrimage through unknown, uninhabited lands, and eventually reached a region called Arzareth, to which God led them by performing Exodus-type wonders en route. According to *British Israel Truth*, an official publication, Arzareth was "a locality south of the country now known as Russia." This story is taken from the apocryphal Second Book of Esdras xiii. 40-46. Arzareth cannot be located in any atlas. The word arose from an application by Jewish leaders of Deuteronomy 29:28 ("the Lord cast them into another land") to the deported Israelites; and "another land" is 'eres 'abereth in Hebrew.² The questionable translation of the phrase to Arzareth is easy for British-Israel enthusiasts to accept.

The Radio Church of God picks up the wanderings of descendants of Judah through Zarah, one of Judah's twin sons, upon whose hand at birth was placed a scarlet thread of distinction. Genesis 38:27-30. Pharez means "breach," a reference to a rift between this son and his brother Zarah. David and his line of kings were descendants of Pharez. This breach is said to mean "the transfer of the Sceptre from the Pharez to the Zarah line," which occurred after Zedekiah's death. To bring about the perpetuity of the line of David, it is said that marriage between a Pharez heir and one of the Zarah line must and did occur. Then it is claimed that the descendants of Zarah became wanderers who journeyed to the Scythian nations of the northwest, where they joined the ten tribes.³

These descendants of the "lost" house of Israel are said by the Radio Church of God to have appeared eventually in Britain and America as the "Birthright tribes of Ephraim and Manasseh."⁴

Mr. Armstrong then takes the Hebrew word for "covenant," *beriyth* or *berith*, coupled with the name Baal (*Baalberith*, meaning "idol of the covenant") and constructs an astonishing argument to prove that the British nations are the "covenant people." Starting with the Hebrew *berith*, and omitting the vowel "e," there being no vowels anyway in the Hebrew alphabet but retaining the "i" as an Anglicism, we get the word *Brith*. The British, like the Hebrews, drop their "h's" so we get *Brit*. Then a combination of this word with the Hebrew for man, *iyish* or *ish*, results in the composite word British—the word for the covenant man! This is the "new name," it is claimed, referred to in Isaiah 62:2.

These Israelite descendants of Isaac, so the Radio Church of God informs us, drop the "i" from "Isaac" and we have the modern name, "Saac's sons," or as we spell it in shorter form, *Saxons*.⁵

Similar semantic reasoning is seen in reference to Dan's descendants, who are said to have sailed west through the

Mediterranean and thence to northern Ireland, while others of the same tribe took the overland route via Macedonia, central Europe, and Scandinavia, to the British Isles. Proof of these migrations is said to exist in words and syllables such as *Dunkirk*, *Macedonia*, *Dardanelles*, *Denmark* (Dan's mark), *Danube*, *Don*, *Dniester*, *Doncaster*, *Dundel*, *Dunbar*, *Edinburgh*, *London*, and so on.

The science of comparative philology completely disproves the argument that similarity of words or syllables, as between one language and another, proves of itself common or similar racial origin. The English language is Aryan in origin; and Hebrew belongs to the Semitic group. Any similarity in word or syllable between the two requires other strong scientific support before racial connections can be established. Goudge says: "Arguments from language are common in British-Israel literature, and perhaps expose them to greater ridicule than any others which they employ."⁶

Jeremiah is said to have been transplanted in 580 B.C. and is identified with the legend of a saintly white-haired patriarch who eventually reached northern Ireland, accompanied by the daughter of an Oriental king. With them came one named Simon Brach or Brech. The princess was called Tephî, an abbreviation of Tea-Tephî. This party brought with them some valuable relics, such as a stone called Lia-Fail (a mysterious name reading the same either forward or backward) or "stone of destiny," a harp, and an ark. The stone, "Jacob's pillar of stone" of Genesis 28:18, eventually became enshrined in the Westminster Abbey throne on which many kings of Scotland, Ireland, and England have been crowned, including the present queen.

The Hebrew princess in this story (Jeremiah 43:5-7) is said to have been the sole surviving heir to David's throne, being the daughter of King Zedekiah, the last king of Israel. She supposedly married the Irish chieftain Heremon, from which sprang the British royal line.⁷

Not a scintilla of Biblical or historical evidence supports the idea that Jeremiah ever left Egypt, where refugees fleeing from Jerusalem took him after the murder of Gedaliah. Jeremiah 41:3. After the various deportations, three main Jewish groups developed—this one in Egypt, one in Babylonia, and a third in Palestine. So far as the best scholarship knows, Jeremiah disappeared by death in Egypt.⁸

A certain British-Israel author, W. T. Jarrold, produced a book entitled *Our Great Heritage*, in which he claims the late Queen Mary as the ninety-ninth generation from King David, and His Royal Highness the then Prince of Wales (called David in his family) as the one-hundredth.⁹ This theory is further pursued in a pamphlet entitled "David's Imperishable Throne in Britain," by T. H. Whitehouse, who asked if there would be a British David ready to hand over the scepter, crown, and throne to the Lord Jesus Christ at His coming. Incidentally, the Prince of Wales in question became King Edward VIII, who abdicated in 1936 after a short reign, without impressing the world that he was the child of destiny.

History offers no confirmation of the above teachings of the Radio Church of God—a fact that should definitely influence the careful student against the British-Israel theory.

A similar situation exists regarding the so-called "Stone of Scone" in Westminster Abbey. In June, 1865, Dean Stanley requested the famous Professor A. C. Ramsay, of the Department of Geology, London University, to examine this stone carefully. This he did. He reported that it was of "calcareous sandstone of a reddish or purplish colour and contains heterogeneous pebbles," of Scottish origin. This report has been confirmed by every subsequent examination by reputable geologists.¹⁰ The Geological Survey of Palestine records the existence of sandstone forma-

tions at the southern end of the Dead Sea and the Palestine Plain, according to the same author, but they are yellow and not red and contain no calcium or pebbles.

Yet these evidences do not deter British-Israel advocates in claiming that the identical stone of Jacob (Genesis 28:18) is part of the throne of David, and lies now in Westminster Abbey, London, England.

Other Supposed Identifying Factors

Other alleged identifications could be multiplied, each based on the same subjective "evidence." We can mention but a few. In their determination to identify Britain and the United States as Ephraim and Manasseh, advocates of the British-American-Israel theory force many prophetic words into their pattern.¹¹

1. *An empire* (not a republic, because "Kings shall come out of thy loins") that girdles the globe with its colonies. In Deuteronomy 32:7-9, "lot" in verse 9 is said to mean "girdle," "outside circle," et cetera. "A nation and a company of nations" is also made to mean a nation with colonies. North America comes into the picture as one of the branches of Joseph (Manasseh) because Genesis 49:22 says, "Whose branches run over the wall"—another phrase associated with a colonizing people.¹²

2. *A conquering, invincible people* because (a) "Thine hand shall be lifted up upon thine adversaries, and all thine enemies shall be cut off"; and (b) "No weapon that is formed against thee shall prosper." Micah 5:9; Isaiah 54:17.¹³

3. *A seafaring or naval power* because (a) "Ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein; the isles, and the inhabitants thereof"; (b) "His seed shall be in many waters, . . . and his kingdom shall be exalted." Isaiah 42:10; Numbers 24:7.¹⁴

4. *A kingdom ruled by the line of David.*¹⁵ In 2 Samuel 7:12-16 these words, spoken after Nathan told David that his seed and not he himself should build a temple of wor-

ship, are used: "He shall build an house for My name, and I will stablish the throne of his kingdom forever." In 1 Kings 9:5 God said to Solomon: "I will establish the throne of thy kingdom upon Israel forever." But there is scarcely a more evident conditional prophecy in all Scripture than this passage in verses 4 to 7, as these words prove: "*If* thou wilt walk before Me, as David thy father walked, . . . to do according to all that I have commanded thee . . . : *then* will I establish the throne." Again, "But *if* ye shall at all turn from following Me . . . : *then* will I cut off Israel out of the land . . . ; and Israel shall be a proverb and a by-word among all people."

Despite these misapplications, exponents of the theory under consideration continue to interpret 2 Samuel 7:12-17 (and parallel passages) as God's pledge that Israel's throne was to be the perpetual possession of David's literal lineal descendants. But Acts 2:30-32 provides the Bible student with the correct interpretation: "Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his throne. . . . This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses."

Of David's seed Paul said in Acts 13:23: "Of this man's seed hath God according to His promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus." Matthew 1:6-17 clearly traces the genealogical succession through some twenty-eight generations from David to "Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."

If yet more evidence is needed that Jesus was great David's greater Son, in whom all God's promises will yet be fulfilled, one has only to read Matthew 22:41, 42; Luke 1:26-33; Acts 2:29-36; Romans 1:3, et cetera.

All of this means that Matthew, Luke, Peter, and Paul did not believe that the male line became extinct with Zedekiah, as is required by Anglo-Israelism.

If the reader would like to know more on how Britain and America come into the British-Israel picture, with the

state church wedded to the Ten Commandments, and much more, he can find it all in Hine's *The British Nation Identified With Lost Israel*, in Poole's *Fifty Reasons Why the Anglo-Saxons Are Israelites*, and in many other British-Israel publications. Readers with the time and inclination might pursue this investigation through David Davidson's *The Great Pyramid: Its Divine Message*, a book of nearly 600 pages, profusely illustrated, and Fredrick Haberman's 100-page *The Great Pyramid's Message to America*. It is safe to say that the great majority who compare such studies with current history will be disillusioned with British-Israel argumentation. So much that sounded like plausible fulfillment of prophecy in the heyday of the British Empire, has no meaning today.

In fairness we should say that not all adherents of British-Israel ideas believe everything once taught on this subject, and since the decline of the British Empire, attempts have been made to change some of the now embarrassing details of this vast area of theorizing and subjective thinking.

Some of the unscholarly arguments from language the British Israel World Federation has endeavored to repudiate because they subjected the movement to ridicule. For example, extreme enthusiasts maintained that since the tribe of Dan were "the great shipowners of Israel," they were most capable of escaping "to the isles afar off," and "there, to find the tribe of Dan is virtually the same as finding the whole tribes of Israel." The reasoning proceeded, as shown above, to connect Dan with the Danes and with the Irish Tuatha Danian. The argument then went on to attempt a linkup of the language of the British Isles with Hebrew influence and thus with Israelitish tribal connections.

Much of this theorizing has been incorporated into the teachings of the Radio Church of God—legend, philology, history, subjective Biblical interpretation being thus put together to produce conclusions lacking the support of sound evidence.

The prophet Amos carried out his mission of rebuking the sins of God's people at a time when Judah and Israel were prosperous. He endeavored to lead them to repentance. In his last chapter he addressess "the sinful kingdom" of Israel, and foretells (Amos 9:8-10) its destruction and the scattering of the tribes. From these calamities, which involved the eventual obliteration of distinct tribal delineations, only the faithful "remnant" of all the tribes would return. See Jeremiah 30:3, 11; Hosea 1:11; 9:17.

In Amos 9:11, 12 the prophet turns to promises of a future restoration: "In that day will I raise up the tabernacle of David that is fallen, and close up the breaches thereof; and I will raise up his ruins, and I will build it as in the days of old; that they may possess the remnant of Edom, and of all the heathen, which are called by My name, saith the Lord that doeth this."

"These promises were fulfilled in part to those who returned after the Babylonian exile. They could have been realized fully, but both Israel and Judah failed to live up to their possibilities. . . . Consequently, the Lord gave the Gentiles the opportunity that Israel lost, and these glorious promises will be realized by the faithful ones of all nations who will compose the church of the Lord.¹⁶

The promises to Abraham through Christ, in other words, are open to men of faith—Jews and Gentiles—of every nation.

REFERENCES

1. Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews*, Bk. xi., ch. 5, par. 2.
2. See the account in Box, *The Ezra-Apocalypse*, 1912; Box in Charles, R. H., *Apocalypse and Pseudepigrapha*, ii. 542-624.
3. H. W. Armstrong, "The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy" (25-page pamphlet), page 13 ff.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 17 ff.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 17, 18.
6. L. H. Goudge, *The British-Israel Theory*, page 96.
7. Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 19.
8. See any good Bible dictionary.

9. W. T. Jarrold, *Our Great Heritage*, page 160.
10. Wm. Henry Smith, *The Ten Tribes of Israel Never Lost*, page 91.
11. See Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pp. 20-22.
12. See Edward Hine, *The British Nation Identified With Lost Israel*, pages 18-24.
13. *Ibid.*, pp. 39-41.
14. *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 38, 39.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 30.
16. *SDA Bible Commentary*, Vol. 4, p. 983.

9.

The Crucifixion and Resurrection

Was Christ crucified on Wednesday or Friday? How long was He in the tomb? Was the resurrection on Saturday or on Sunday?

The Radio Church of God has adopted the idea that Christ was crucified on a Wednesday, that He remained in the tomb not less than seventy-two hours, and that He therefore arose from the dead on Saturday. These ideas are set forth in a sixteen-page leaflet entitled "The Crucifixion Was NOT on Friday," by Herman L. Hoeh, and in a smaller pamphlet entitled "The Resurrection Was NOT on Sunday," by H. W. Armstrong. We base this discussion upon the following assertions found in these pamphlets:

(1) It teaches that Christ said that the only sign He would give to prove His Messiahship was His remaining *exactly* three days and three nights in the tomb; (2) it asserts the *only* evidence of Messiahship Jesus offered the Pharisees was this length of time in the tomb, and NOT the fact of the resurrection; (3) it believes that if Jesus failed to remain at least seventy-two hours in the tomb He must be rejected as an impostor;¹ (4) they state that the calendar used by the Jews in Christ's time was divinely inspired and it is still in use today; therefore we can know precisely which day was the Passover in Passion Week, thereby establishing with certainty the dates for the crucifixion and resurrection.²

What Was the Sign of Christ's Messiahship?

The key passage in this controversy concerns our Lord's words to the scribes and Pharisees: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." Matthew 12:39, 40.

The parallel passages are Matthew 16:4 and Luke 11:29-32, which contain no reference whatever to the time element. The second of these texts says, in part: "For as Jonah was a sign unto the Ninevites, so shall also the Son of man be to this generation."

Thus the "sign of the prophet Jonas" was his preaching which led the Ninevites to repentance—not the literal time he was engulfed by a sea monster. The length of time of Jonah's imprisonment in the sea monster meant nothing to the Ninevites.

Was the "sign of the prophet Jonas" the *only* sign of Christ's Messiahship? Before His birth the shepherds were told: "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the City of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger." Luke 2:10-12.

The NEB says: "And this is your sign: you will find a baby." And the terms "the Messiah, the Lord" are used. The same Greek word rendered "sign" is used in these two passages, and the shepherds in Luke recognized the Lord through this sign and gave God the glory. Luke 2:20.

The authenticity of Christ's claim to be the Messiah is the central discussion in John 6:27-29, and this time "the people" asked Him: "What sign [same word, *sēmeion*] showest Thou then, that we may see, and believe Thee? what dost Thou work?" John 6:30.

His dissertation in this chapter on "the bread of life" sets forth truth about Himself as the Sent of God and posits faith in Him based on that truth as the "sign" of His Messiahship. This truth involved everything that Calvary stands for, but nothing is said about seventy-two hours in the tomb as the supreme "sign" on which their acceptance of Him was to be based. They were to accept Him on the basis of His life and teachings as the Bread of Life, seen and heard by them and sent by God. This is clearly set forth in John 6:30-58. Verse 40 contains the main thought: "This is the will of Him that sent Me, that everyone which seeth the Son, and believeth on Him, may have everlasting life."

The atoning death and the glorious resurrection and ascension clinched the already mounting evidence, and became the supreme sign of Messiahship—not the literal number of hours Christ spent in the tomb.

*Did Peter Say Anything About Seventy-two
Hours in the Tomb?*

When Peter stood up at Pentecost as one of the greatest of the original Christian apologists, he cried: "Ye men of Israel, hear these words; Jesus of Nazareth, a Man approved of God among you by miracles and wonders and signs, which God did by Him in the midst of you, as ye yourselves also know." Acts 2:22.

Here Peter specifies some things that were "signs" (Greek: *sēmeiois*) to him: the "miracles and wonders and signs" that Christ had wrought during His ministry. These supernatural wonders in word and deed were all "signs" of His Messiahship, some recognized at the time, some later. Peter then proceeds to speak of Christ's death and resurrection, the prophetic foretelling of these things, and His exaltation at God's right hand. He concludes with the memorable words, "God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." Verse 36.

Now if seventy-two hours in the grave were the sole, or

the greatest, sign of our Lord's Messiahship, surely His disciple, Peter, would have proclaimed it repeatedly in those crucial days. But not a word of this literal seventy-two hours is mentioned. Not a whisper of "this one and only supernatural PROOF" of Jesus as Messiah, as Mr. Armstrong calls it.

Did Jesus Predict Exactly Seventy-two Hours in the Tomb?

Mr. Armstrong says that "Jesus offered but one evidence [of His Messiahship]. That evidence was not the fact of the resurrection itself—it was the LENGTH OF TIME He would repose in His grave."³ If this is true, we are faced with problems in explaining our Lord's words in Matthew 16:21; 20:17-19; and in Mark 10:32-34. In these passages He foretold in some detail His trial, His crucifixion, and His resurrection "the third day." The reason for this foretelling of His passion and triumph over death is given in John 13:19: "Now I tell you before it come, that, when it is come to pass, ye may believe that I am He."

Here is explicit proof that the fulfillment of His predictions was a sign of His Messiahship. Like Peter, our Lord entirely omits specific reference to a literal seventy-two hours in the tomb as proof that He was the Messiah.

To the Jews our Lord in unequivocal words gave His crucifixion as proof of His credentials as the Redeemer of men, and this was convincing to many: "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He." "As He spake these words, many believed on Him." John 8:28, 30.

If the reader will examine Christ's declaration of His Messiahship to the woman at the well (John 4:25-29), also to the man born blind (John 9:30-41), He will again find no mention of the time period in the tomb as proof of His Messiahship. Rather in the former he will find the conclusion that Christ was indeed the Messiah because He probed the secrets of the human heart, and, in the latter, that He was "the Son of God" because He cured blindness.

To the words of Peter and Jesus we may add those of the two disciples on the Emmaus road, who were discussing "the things which are come to pass there [Jerusalem] in these days." Luke 24:18. In reply Jesus began "at Moses and all the prophets," and "He expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself." Verse 27. This event occurred after His resurrection at a time vital to the launching of His church; yet we find not the remotest suggestion of seventy-two hours in the tomb as the sole or supreme sign of His Messiahship. The obvious explanation is that the *fact* of His resurrection, and *not* the literal number of hours He was in the tomb, constitutes the supreme and incontestable sign of our Lord's deity and Messiahship.

The facts are that Christ's Emmaus road encounter took place "upon the first day of the week," or "that same day [Sunday]," on the day the two disciples said, "Today is the third day since these things were done." Verse 21. The phrase "these things" is explained in Luke 24:20 as His condemnation and crucifixion. Jesus replied to the two disciples, "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day." Verse 46. Thus in one conversation Christ asserts that He was to rise from the dead on the third day, and the disciples identify that "today" [Sunday] to be the third day. Noteworthy is the absence of any correction made by Jesus regarding their understanding that that very day was the third day. Jesus did not say, "No, you are mistaken; yesterday was the third day."

What Did "Three Days and Three Nights" Mean?

There are some key texts on "three days and three nights" and similar expressions in the New Testament, and we note some of them here, emphasizing the phrase and identifying the speaker.

A. Used Before the Resurrection:

1. "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be *three days and*

three nights in the heart of the earth." (Jesus) Matthew 12:40.

2. "And be raised again *the third day*." (Jesus) Matthew 16:21.

3. And *the third day* He shall be raised again." (Jesus) Matthew 17:23.

4. "And *the third day* He shall rise again." (Jesus) Matthew 20:19.

5. "That deceiver said, . . . *After three days* I will rise again." (chief priests and Pharisees) Matthew 27:63.

6. "Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until *the third day*." (chief priests and Pharisees) Matthew 27:64.

7. "He shall rise *the third day*." (Jesus) Mark 9:31.

8. "*The third day* He shall rise again." (Jesus) Mark 10:34.

9. "And be raised *the third day*." (Jesus) Luke 9:22.

10. And *the third day* He shall rise again." (Jesus) Luke 18:33.

11. "And in *three days* I will raise it up." (Jesus) John 2:19.

B. *Used After the Resurrection:*

12. "And *the third day* rise again." (an angel) Luke 24:7.

13. "Today is *the third day* since these things were done." (two disciples) Luke 24:21.

14. "Thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead *the third day*." (Jesus) Luke 24:46.

15. "Him God raised up *the third day*." (Peter) Acts 10:40.

16. "He rose again *the third day*." (Paul) 1 Corinthians 15:4.

It can be seen from the contextual setting of the above sixteen passages that (1) all refer to the resurrection, (2) all must refer to the same passage of time, and (3) they provide evidence from our Lord, His disciples, angels,

prominent unbelieving Jewish leaders, and the apostle Paul of a wide cross section of usage of the terms "third day" and "three days."

What matters now is to ascertain what these expressions meant in terms of a specific time period to the persons who used them at that early beginning of Christian history.

The argument insisting on the literal twenty-four-hour day wherever these relevant texts are mentioned, leads into strange inconsistency, as another glance at Matthew 12:40 will show: "For as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

Now if we insist on a literal interpretation of the "three days and three nights" as seventy-two hours, why not insist on a literal interpretation of "in the heart of the earth" as burial literally deep in the earth? Actually, however, Jesus was placed in Joseph's rock tomb, a sepulcher either wholly or in part aboveground, so that the three women in Mark 16:1, 2 and "certain others with them" in Luke 24:1-3, could enter. It is unreasonable to insist that we must take one part of a verse literally and another part of the same verse figuratively, unless the context clearly warrants it. The fact is that in this instance neither was literal. Yet in both cases—the method of counting and the nature of the grave—correct idiomatic language was used, and any deviation from strict literality does not mean that Jesus was not the Messiah.

One other point strikes us regarding this rock-hewn tomb. The chief priests and Pharisees had requested that it be securely sealed and guarded. If Christ did rise from the dead on Saturday, it is certain that this tremendous event would have become known to both disciples and guards within a few hours, yet the guards were still on duty at the grave Sunday morning. Matthew 28:2, 4. Once again we see that the theory of a Wednesday crucifixion and a Saturday resurrection creates more problems than its advocates think it solves.

The Meaning of "Day" and "Night"

In Old and New Testament times a "day" could refer simply to the daylight hours, in contrast to the dark hours of "night"; or the word "day" could mean the whole twenty-four-hour period of light and dark hours—even as it can have both meanings today.

Jesus said, "Are there not twelve hours in the day? If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not. . . . But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth." John 11:9, 10. Here he used "day" in the arbitrary sense of the daylight hours as opposed to the dark hours. We might use similar language today, but the exact wording would not be literally true because the daylight varies in length except at the equator. Yet it was correct colloquial usage in Christ's time.

On the term "day" we find this in the *Jewish Encyclopedia*: "So that the term *day* is used in a double sense: (1) as the period of twenty-four hours, and (2) as daytime. Which of the two meanings the word carries in any particular passage of the Bible can easily be gathered from the context or from parallel passages."⁴

Methods of Counting

Counting days and years in Biblical times was done on the basis of "inclusive reckoning." For example, in 2 Kings 18:9, 10 it is said that Samaria was under siege from "the fourth year of King Hezekiah, which was the seventh year of Hoshea. . . . And at the end of the three years they took it: even in the sixth year of Hezekiah, that is the ninth year of Hoshea King of Israel." In our terminology we would say the siege lasted two years, subtracting four from six, or seven from nine, whichever king's reign we had in mind. But the recorder here used inclusive reckoning, counting four, five, and six, or seven, eight, and nine, as three years, employing the phrase "at the end of three years" for a siege known to be less than three full years.

A Hebrew baby was eight days old on its eighth day

(Genesis 17:12; Leviticus 12:3; Luke 1:59; 2:21) on the basis of counting both the first and the eighth day as one day.

In Genesis 42:17-19 Joseph's brethren were placed in "ward three days," yet it was "the third day" that Joseph told them to prove themselves by going home and bringing their youngest brother to him. Another clear case of inclusive reckoning of three days is seen in 1 Kings 12:5, 12. Compare 2 Chronicles 10:5, 12.

This inclusive method of ancient reckoning used in Egypt, Rome, and Greece is still used in the Orient and other parts of the world. In many countries a tourist today purchasing a three-day ticket on a Sunday will complete his journey on Tuesday. This may be less than seventy-two hours, but it cannot be more.

We may illustrate the inclusive method of reckoning time in connection with Christ's crucifixion and resurrection (as contrasted with the elapsed time method) with a simple diagram:

(Elapsed)

1	day	2	days	3	days
Friday		Sabbath		Sunday	
1st day		2nd day		3rd day	

(Inclusive)

Gospel Records Refute a Wednesday Crucifixion

A day known as "the preparation" or "the preparation day" figures prominently in our attempts to clarify the chronology of the passion week. It appears in all four gospel records:

"Now the next day, that *followed the day of preparation*, the chief priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate,

saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. Command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure until the third day." Matthew 27:62-64.

"And when evening had come, since it was *the day of preparation*, that is, the day before the Sabbath, Joseph of Arimathea . . . asked for the body of Jesus." Mark 15:42, 43, RSV.

"The day before the Sabbath" is part of a specific expression in the Greek text, indicating that it was the day before the Sabbath (*prosabbaton*) and that it was the preparation (*paraskenē*), which is the modern Greek word for *Friday*. There is no possibility here for mistaking this preparation for the Sabbath day, and it cannot refer to any other festival on some other day of the week: "And that day was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on ["was beginning," RSV; "was about to begin," NEB]." Luke 23:54.

"And it was the preparation of the Passover, and about the sixth hour: and he saith unto the Jews, Behold your King!" John 19:14.

Some critics have tried to point out what they think are discrepancies in the Gospel records because, whereas all four agree that Jesus and His disciples celebrated the Last Supper the night before the crucifixion, the first three call it "the Passover," but John says that the Jews celebrated the Passover supper the night following the crucifixion. The explanation does not lie in contradiction so much as in the use of changed and varied terms in the days of Christ.

Originally the word "Passover" referred only to Nisan 14, but in Christ's day it was also often applied, Josephus confirms, to the seven-day Feast of Unleavened Bread. Similarly the term, "the Feast of Unleavened Bread," was used at times to include the Passover, as in Luke 22:7: "Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." The Gospels speak of "the preparation" as referring sometimes to the Passover, sometimes to the

weekly Sabbath; and some texts, such as the one just quoted, seem to include both Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread (the seven days following the Passover).

With this in mind, let us now read two more passages.

"Now the Feast of Unleavened Bread drew nigh, which is called the Passover." Luke 22:1.

"Then came the day of unleavened bread, when the Passover must be killed." Luke 22:7.

Here we see how the whole period of seven days from Nisan 14 came to be called "Passover."

Meticulous arrangements required for these celebrations were called "the preparation." But this term is also used for preparation for the weekly Sabbath. We have quoted Mark, who says that Joseph of Arimathea begged custody of the body of Jesus because it was "the preparation," that is, the day before the weekly Sabbath. Luke uses similar language.

John speaks of "the preparation of the Passover." John 19:14. In verse 31 of this same chapter John brings together the phrases "the preparation" for the Sabbath and "that Sabbath was an high day." What made it a "high day"?

Lenski, commenting on this and Luke 23:54 (quoted above) says: "This was, of course, Friday, but not in the same sense that every Friday was 'Preparation Day'; only one Sabbath had such a Friday, and that was the Sabbath of the Passover week. 'Preparation' means that all things had to be prepared and arranged in such a way that this high and exceptional Sabbath could be spent in perfect quiet in the most solemn manner. Such was the day, and it was now almost over for 'Sabbath was dawning.'"⁵

Evidence that the day for slaying the paschal lamb (Nisan 14) fell on Friday in A.D. 31 is, we think, more conclusive than that for Wednesday. Thus, in our Lord's Passion Week, preparation for the Passover and preparation for the weekly Sabbath coincided, we believe. The Sabbath was thus a "high day."

This highlights a Friday crucifixion. Jesus was buried on the preparation day for these two concurrent events, a fact which leaves no room for any other suggestion than a Friday crucifixion, a Sabbath rest in the tomb, and a Sunday resurrection.

To insist that Jesus was crucified on Wednesday afternoon and remained "three [literal twenty-four-hour] days and nights in the heart of the earth" (Matthew 12:40), creates problems we cannot solve. For example, in Luke 23:54 we read, "And that day [of crucifixion] was the preparation, and the Sabbath drew on." If "that day" was Wednesday, why did the women wait until the weekly Sabbath (Saturday) was over before anointing the body? They could have done this on Thursday or Friday without violating any ceremonial laws. Instead, they "rested the [weekly] Sabbath day according to the commandment" (Luke 23:56) and then brought the spices on the first day of the week (Luke 24:1).

There is also another problem here. To keep an unembalmed body for over seventy-two hours, from Wednesday afternoon until after Saturday night, was not possible in a climate where decomposition would have set in before that.

Moreover, Peter made a strong point in his sermon at Pentecost about the absence of corruption in the body of the risen Lord. He quoted Psalm 16:10 ("neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption" and applied it as follows: "He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that His soul was not left in hell, neither His flesh did see corruption." Acts 2:31.

Thus the idea of a Wednesday crucifixion finds no support in any of the Gospels. All give the same sequence of events—a Friday crucifixion, a Sabbath rest in the tomb, and a resurrection on the third day, which was Sunday—three days by inclusive reckoning.

The Problem of Matthew 28:1

"In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn toward

the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulcher." Matthew 28:1.

The harmony of the four Gospels really answers the problem of Matthew 28:1, where the Greek words *opse de sabbaton* have caused some debate because the Greek word *opse* is rendered "end" (in the KJV) but may mean either "late" or "after." Herman L. Hoeh, of the Radio Church of God, says that "in the end" is incorrect, and should read "after the sabbath," or better still, "after the sabbaths."⁶ It has been rendered "after the Sabbath" (RSV), "when the Sabbath was over" (Phillips), "the Sabbath had passed" (NEB), "on the eve of the sabbaths" (Young). *Opse* is used only three times in the New Testament—in Matthew 28:1, Mark 11:19, and Mark 13:35—and only in Matthew is it translated "end."

Edgar Goodspeed's translation of the difficult phrase *opse de sabbaton* is: "After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning." This rendering, supported by other competent authorities, harmonizes with the other Gospel writers. No warrant exists for attempting to make the phrase in question apply to the hours of the Sabbath in order to try to prove a Sabbath resurrection. Christ arose not during the actual Sabbath hours, but toward the dawn of the first day of the week, as given in Matthew 28:1. Thus Mary Magdalene (John 20:1) set out before dawn in the twilight and walked the approximately two miles from Bethany to the tomb, arriving there by sunrise.

Some Evidence From Old Testament Types

All Christian students acknowledge the prophetic element in many Old Testament types, such as the Passover lamb which foreshadowed the death of Christ as "the Lamb of God." John 1:36. Compare Revelation 5:12. But types had to do with *time* sometimes, in addition to events.

For instance, in Exodus 12:6 the lamb was to be slain "in the evening," or, literally, "between the evenings." While this does not pinpoint an exact moment, it does

indicate an evening sacrifice on Nisan 14. This has always had deep meaning to Christians who have seen both time and event fulfilled in the Friday afternoon sacrifice of our Lord who was slain for the sins of the world. Perhaps some cumulative evidence of theological significance can best be seen in a brief tabulation as follows:

1. The paschal lamb prefigured Christ as "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." John 1:29. Paul said: "Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us." 1 Corinthians 5:7.

2. The wave sheaf used during the feast of Unleavened Bread typified "Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept." And Paul stresses this with a repetition: "Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ's at His coming." 1 Corinthians 15:20, 23. This has dual significance. The firstfruits offered by the priests anciently was a sheaf of grain (Leviticus 23:10), not just a single grain. So when Christ rose from the dead "many bodies of the saints which slept arose." Matthew 27:52. The second point of significance is that at the second advent Christ calls forth His sleeping saints and ransoms them from death. Daniel 12:2; 1 Corinthians 15:52-55.

3. The crucifixion took place on "the preparation [the eve] of the Passover," which was Nisan 14 (John 19:14); and Christ died about the *time* of the evening sacrifice. Matthew 27:46, 50.

4. Most scholars agree that the day for offering the paschal lamb (Nisan 14), in the year of the crucifixion, fell on Friday, and this coincides with the preparation for the weekly Sabbath. John 19:14, 31, 42.

5. The first ceremonial Sabbath of the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Nisan 15) therefore coincided with the weekly Sabbath. Leviticus 23:6-8; Mark 15:42 to 16:2; Luke 23:54 to 24:1.

6. The Last Supper took place during the night preceding the crucifixion. Matthew 26:17, 20, 26, 34, 47; 27:1, 2, 31; Mark 14:12, 16, 17; Luke 22:7, 8, 13-15; John 13:2,

4, 30. This was during the early hours of Nisan 14, or Thursday night.

7. John places the official celebration of the Jewish Passover Supper twenty-four hours later than the Last Supper, or on Friday night following the crucifixion, during the early hours of the weekly Sabbath. John 18:28; 19:14, 31. This was Nisan 15, after sunset of Nisan 14.

8. The official celebration of the Passover supper was obviously in the future when the following events occurred: (a) The Last Supper of our Lord. John 13:1. (b) The trial of Jesus. Matthew 26:5; Mark 14:2; John 18:28; 19:14.

9. Jesus lay in the tomb during the weekly Sabbath of Nisan 15. Matthew 27:59 to 28:1; Mark 15:43 to 16:1; Luke 23:54 to 24:1; John 19:38 to 20:1.

10. Jesus rose from the dead early Sunday morning, Nisan 16. Matthew 28:1-6; Mark 16:1-6; Luke 24:1-6; John 20:1-16.

Whatever problems are involved in fixing an exact and detailed chronology of our Lord's passion week, however lacking we are in our knowledge of Jewish customs of the time of Jesus, there seems no reasonable doubt that the above outline offers the best understanding of the day and approximate time of our Lord's crucifixion on Friday afternoon, and His resurrection on Sunday morning. History, chronology, and typology have contributed under the Holy Spirit's guidance to these reasonable conclusions. This leaves us with far fewer problems than if we theorize on a Wednesday crucifixion and a Saturday resurrection.

REFERENCES

1. H. W. Armstrong, "The Resurrection Was NOT on Sunday," pages 3-5.
2. Herman L. Hoeh, "The Crucifixion Was NOT on Friday," page 4.
3. Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
4. *Jewish Encyclopedia*, art. "Calendar," Vol. 3, p. 501.
5. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, page 1165.
6. Hoeh, *op. cit.*, p. 2.

10.

Some Other Teachings, Part I

1. CREATION AND EVOLUTION

Did the earth exist before the creation of Genesis 1? Was the earth originally the abode of Satan? Was the earth destroyed and recreated before Adam was created?

The Radio Church of God teaches that God created the present order on this earth in six literal days.¹ But the words "in the beginning" in Genesis 1:1, they say, refer to a pre-Adamic creation, and the "void" of Genesis 1:2 refers to a destruction which overtook the original creation as a result of the sin of Lucifer and the angels who followed him. The *renewal* of the earth took place in the six literal days of creation. The former creation, it is said, took place "an indeterminable period of time" before Adam.²

Further, according to the Radio Church of God, it was not the sin of man that caused the darkness and void condition of the earth referred to in Genesis 1:2 (for no man existed on earth until the sixth creation day). Armstrong says that the sin of angels, mentioned in 2 Peter 2:4 and which occurred before the creation of man, brought chaos to this earth. The sinful angels who "left their own habitation" (Jude 6) God "hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day." What geologists see is not a developing universe, says the Radio Church of God, but rather it is the wreckage of a titanic battle waged by spirits long before the creation of man. The

sin of Lucifer and his angels is said to be their ascent from earth to heaven to attempt to rival God on His throne, and they were cast back to the earth. Jude 6 and Isaiah 14:13, 14 are offered as proof of this.³

Adam, it is declared, was given the opportunity to replace Lucifer, who was the ruler of this world.⁴

The theory of evolution is strongly rejected by the Radio Church of God on Biblical grounds, and also because evidence is lacking that life has ever come from dead matter, or that evolution has ever taken place or does at this time.⁵ Thus the Radio Church of God agrees with some fundamentalists on fiat creation.

By way of brief comment, we would point out two observations:

1. No Biblical evidence can be produced to show that the earth was made originally for the habitation of angels. The clear evidence of the Bible supports an earth created for human habitation. Genesis 1:28; Psalm 115:16; Isaiah 45:18.

2. Any discussion about Adam's position, had he not sinned, would be hypothetical, nothing more. The Bible says nothing on the subject.

2. PREDESTINATION

Does predestination mean to be called to salvation in this age? Are some people predestinated, and others not?

In the pamphlet on predestination,⁶ the Radio Church of God teaches the following:

1. That while the Bible mentions predestination four times (Romans 8:29, 30; Ephesians 1:5, 11), nothing is said about being predestinated to be lost. There is no predestination to be saved or lost; but *some*, says the pamphlet, have been predestinated to be "called" to salvation now, during *this age*. Most people are now purposely blinded by God to truth, but they will be called later during the millennial age. Since the present is not the only age for salvation, "probation" will not soon close.

2. It teaches that God turned over to Satan "one week" (each day an actual thousand years)—a complete period of time. According to Armstrong, God said to Satan in effect: "Six days shalt thou labor and do all thy work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work"!

3. The end of the first six days of Satan's six-thousand-year week is approaching, and God's millennial sabbath will follow, the article affirms. During this seventh millennium Satan will be chained, restrained in the symbolic "bottomless pit" (Revelation 20:1-4), but not destroyed.

4. As this millennial sabbath dawns, we are told, Jesus returns as Lord of lords and as High Priest to save. Prior to this, men have lived in Satan's time, during which God has *not* set His hand to save the world. It was given only to *some* to be called and enlightened by truth. 1 Corinthians 1:24-26 is cited as proof. Ezekiel 37 is said to show how millions who never had a chance will be resurrected and given a full chance without a devil to tempt them to sin.

5. Jesus did not say the gospel was to be preached in all the world to convert, Armstrong insists, but as a *witness* that the end of Satan's age, and the beginning of Christ's is near.

6. The Pharisees thought it wrong to heal on the Sabbath, the pamphlet points out. Similarly, religionists of today think that Christ will not heal sin-sick souls during God's millennial Sabbath—but, Armstrong tells us, He will do it, nevertheless.

7. Romans, chapter 11, according to this theory, teaches that the Jews are the house of Judah which split off from Israel in the days of Rehoboam and Jeroboam. Verse 26 teaches that *all* Israel shall be saved. However, the argument continues, only a small portion of Israel (mainly white, English-speaking people) are the birthright people, and they are "the election of grace *at this time*." The rest of the world is deliberately blinded until "the fullness of the Gentiles be come in." "They are not being given any

chance now, at all!" The chance will come to them after the Deliverer comes—during the millennium and subsequently.

8. God's purpose in calling only *some* at this present time, Armstrong proposes, is to train these favored ones to rule with Christ and to be teachers, under Him, after He comes.

9. We should not grieve over our departed loved ones who were not converted, for the chances are that they were not called to salvation in this life, the article explains. They will be resurrected in a mortal state and we, if among the called, may be among the immortalized spirits who will win our own loved ones during the thousand years!

10. We are called now for training—spiritual character training—to be fitted for high positions in the coming kingdom of Christ on earth, we are told. For example, the one who multiplies tenfold in character will be qualified to rule over ten cities. But those who think they receive salvation merely by "accepting Christ" and are deceived by the "no works" idea will find that they did not grow at all in the Christian life, and they will be deprived even of the salvation they thought they had.

11. The Gentiles will turn to Christ as the returned Deliverer during the millennium, Armstrong states; and he quotes Scripture to prove his contention: "Isaiah 11:10-11: 'And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse (Christ), which shall stand for an ensign of the people; and to it (the Root—Christ) *shall the Gentiles seek*: . . . and it shall come to pass in that day, that the Lord shall set His hand again the second time to recover the remnant of His people (Israel).'"

12. Those called and saved before the second coming are separated while Christ is in the air (1 Corinthians 15: 50-53) before He sits on His throne to rule the world, according to the article. There will be another separation afterward (Matthew 25:31-34, 41), which is a different and later separation.

13. Those of us called now, says Armstrong, may lead others who will be called during the millennium; and "through our mercy" they, too, may obtain mercy.

14. All men will have their chance of salvation, but each in his order. This means, according to the article, that "those who were born and lived first receive theirs last. And those born last come in first!" Ezekiel 37 (the valley of dry bones) is said to show how those who died without a chance will be brought to life and saved.

General Comments on the Above

A number of the teachings mentioned here have been answered under our chapters on "Teachings Related to Salvation," "The Coming Kingdom," and "The Millennium and end of evil." Readers may wonder how many of the above points really pertain to the doctrine of predestination, but in Radio Church of God teachings, the matter of being "called" *now* or *later* is closely tied with the other doctrines on salvation.

The main point seems to be Mr. Armstrong's position that predestination is not to salvation or damnation, but to being called to a "life of training" in this age, and this presumably means Radio Church of God teachings. Thus God decided in advance who should be "called." But the Bible teaches that the real decisive factor in salvation is to believe the truth as it is in Christ Jesus. If people were predestinated to accept true teachings, would they not thereby be predestinated to be saved?

We believe that arbitrary predestination contradicts Scripture. When God desires that all men should be saved (Ephesians 1:4, 5; 1 Timothy 2:4), He marks out the pathway to salvation and warns against taking the path to destruction. We are saved or lost as we follow the pathway of our choice. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life." Romans 6:23. We accept the view that God's free grace is available to all; but we also recognize the mystery of divine foreknowledge.

In Radio Church of God teaching, predestination to

accept their teaching means that believers will become immortal when Christ returns and they will then work for unsaved mortals during the millennium. It is stated that they will occupy positions of honor and glory because of the fruits of their lives on earth now. They are said to be established to reign with Christ from Palestine, where they will have a kingdom into which still-mortal sinners will not be allowed to enter (Revelation 21:27). Then, at the end of the millennium, it is said that these mortals also will be "born again" and become immortal. Then, too, the wicked dead of all ages are said to be raised to life and given their chance to be saved, after which they, too, will become immortal. A small remnant of mankind who resist salvation will ultimately be destroyed.

No acceptable proofs are offered for these teachings, which are discussed in greater detail elsewhere in this book.

3. SATAN

What was Satan's origin? Is he an immortal sinner? Is his future undecided?

Radio Church of God literature claims that Satan is a spirit and therefore immortal. Luke 20:36 is used as "clinching proof" that Satan cannot die: "NEITHER CAN THEY DIE ANY MORE, for they are equal unto the angels."⁷

It teaches that God created the perfect being, Lucifer, and assigned him to rule over this earth in pre-Adamic times. Ezekiel 28:13 is cited as proof: "*Thou* hast been in *Eden* the garden of God."⁸ But Lucifer was not satisfied to rule over the perfect earth and its angelic inhabitants; and "he greedily desired to REPLACE God Almighty as Supreme Ruler of the universe! (Isa. 14:12-14.) He said, 'I will *ascend* above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High' (Verse 14)." Lucifer and one third of the angels "ascended to heaven in an attempt to knock God off His throne and take over rulership of the entire universe! (Isa. 14:13.)" It was for this sin, says the Radio

Church of God, that God obliterated the pre-Adamic earth by the use of "cataclysmic physical forces" leaving the world under water.⁹ Thus appears a perfect creation, followed by a complete destruction in pre-Adamic times. Proof offered is Genesis 1:1, 2, concerning which it is claimed that the expression "the earth was without form, and void" should have been translated "the earth *became* without form."¹⁰

God gave Adam a chance to replace Satan as "god of this world," claims the Radio Church of God, but Adam failed by obeying the devil, and "the whole human race was sold down the river to the devil ever since."¹¹ Four thousand years later Jesus Christ entered the contest, refused to follow Satan, and thus Christ became, in their words, "the successor of Satan" and qualified to become ruler of this earth—which rule He will begin at His second coming.¹²

The "beast" and the "false prophet," said to be two individuals (a military leader and a religious leader),¹³ will be cast at the beginning of the thousand years into the lake of fire—an "AGE-LASTING fire," that will burn for the duration of the millennium, and Satan and his angels will be cast into this fire at the end of this period. This fire will not hurt Satan because he is a spirit, and "spirit is NOT COMBUSTIBLE!"¹⁴

Satan's fate is not annihilation, as some teach, says the Radio Church of God. When God says to Satan, "I will destroy thee" (Ezekiel 28:16), the Radio Church of God claims that the word "destroy" is explained by the word "from" which follows. He is said to be destroyed "FROM the midst of the stones of fire," or from "the location of God's seat of authority."¹⁵

While in the fire he will suffer mental torment at seeing his work destroyed. His "ultimate destination is yet to be decided—*by the saints!*" Proof offered is Jude 13-15, from which the inference is drawn that "wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness forever" may indicate that Satan and his hosts will become disembodied spirits "wandering through 'dry places, seeking rest,'" un-

able to materialize, therefore in agony forever, being "tormented unto the *ages of the ages*."¹⁶

Comments on the Above

The above Radio Church of God teachings would make completion of the plan of salvation, which involves the total eradication of sin, impossible; for as long as there is a living Satan, sin continues to exist. An eternally living Satan would perpetuate evil forever. Satan as a disembodied spirit would still be an evil spirit, whose existence would contradict God's promises that sin shall be no more. When Garner Ted Armstrong cites Ezekiel 28:16 in his pamphlet "Satan's Fate" and says that "God does NOT say Satan is to be DESTROYED," but only that he "is to be DESTROYED FROM a certain place," he apparently overlooks verse 19. It says of Satan, "never shalt thou be anymore," or "you . . . shall be no more forever" (RSV).

We are told in the same pamphlet: "Jesus tells us that angels *cannot die!* Satan is a fallen angel! Therefore Satan *cannot die!*"¹⁷

We agree that unfallen angels have not died, but Satan and his hosts *have sinned*, and for both men and angels, "the wages of sin is death." Romans 6:23. We know of no Scriptural evidence that angels, fallen or unfallen, are inherently immortal. They, like the redeemed saints, possess this quality of life only as a gift from God and retain it only by a living connection with God through submission to His will, or, as Luke 20:36 puts it, by virtue of their being "the children of God." Should they break this connection by rebellion, as Lucifer and his angels did, they would no longer possess immortality. The argument that a "spirit" cannot die is likewise unsound, for we read in 1 Timothy 6:15, 16, that God alone is immortal: "Who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; who only hath immortality."

Immortality is to be given at the second advent to mortals who have been saved (1 Corinthians 15:53), but we know

of no Scriptural evidence that immortality has been or will be given to created beings, angels or men, to be irreversibly theirs even if they should sin. The Bible teaches, on the contrary, that the destroyer and all his works will be destroyed. Of Satan it is said, "I will bring thee to ashes upon the earth in the sight of all them that beheld thee." Ezekiel 28:18.

The contention that Satan and his hosts are immortal sinners, condemned to endure agony as disembodied spirits in some place of darkness forever, is devoid of Scripture proof. By comparison, the Scripture teaching that these forces of evil meet with ultimate annihilation in the lake of fire, after justly suffering punishment for the origination of evil, is far more consonant with the concept of a God of love and a universe to be purged forever of sin and its results.

The lake of fire (Revelation 20:10, 14, 15) produces "the second death," and brings an end to all evil in the universe at the close of "the thousand years." In this way the controversy between Christ and Satan—in which the Radio Church of God does not believe—comes to a final end. In "a new heaven, and a new earth" filled with redeemed righteous people, the process of redemption from sin comes to an end. The most satisfactory solution to the sin problem is its eventual universal eradication, which the Bible teaches will be accomplished when Satan and the hosts of evil are cast into the lake of fire, which consumes them so that "no place was found for them" forever. Revelation 20:10, 11.

4. *SIN, SORROW, AND SUFFERING*

It is stated repeatedly in Radio Church of God literature that sorrow, suffering, and sin in this world were deliberately planned by God, so that human beings would learn their lessons more deeply. God is now developing men to become even greater than Adam was—greater than angels or archangels. This is the "process of salvation." God made

man to "desire (lust) to go contrary to His laws" so that we will naturally sin, but in the next world the necessary changes will be made in human nature.¹⁸ In this way "Jesus . . . shall save his people from their sins. Matthew 1: 21."

These views are discussed more fully in our chapter on "Teachings Related to Salvation." God, in His infinite skill, can, of course, bring victory out of any circumstance, no matter how forbidding. But his is not to say that He deliberately planned human existence to include suffering. In all our sorrows He is also grieved, but He will sustain us if we put our trust in Him. He did not ordain suffering, but He provides redeeming grace to carry us through it.

REFERENCES

1. Kenneth C. Herrmann, "How Long Were the 'Days' of Creation?"
2. *Ibid.*; H. W. Armstrong, "Did God Create a Devil?" page 1; *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 11, page 11.
3. H. W. Armstrong, "Did God Create a Devil?" pages 1, 2.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
5. Kenneth C. Herrmann, "The Origin of Life."
6. H. W. Armstrong, "Predestination—Does the Bible Teach It?"
7. Garner Ted Armstrong, "Satan's Fate," page 4.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 1.
9. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 11, page 10.
10. H. W. Armstrong, "Did God Create a Devil?" page 1.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 3.
12. *Ibid.*
13. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 3, pages 8, 10.
14. Garner Ted Armstrong, *op. cit.*, p. 3.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
16. *Ibid.*
17. *Ibid.*
18. C. P. Meredith, "Is This the Only Day of Salvation?" pages 2-4.

II.

Some Other Teachings, Part 2

5. THE SABBATH, AND THE FEASTS AND FESTIVALS

Are the feasts and festivals of Old Testament typology to be observed today? Did the early Christians observe the festivals as well as the Christian ordinances?

The Radio Church of God teaches not only the observance of the seventh day Sabbath of the Decalogue, but it also enjoins the observance of the holy days, the feasts, and the festivals of ancient Israel.

The annual feast days, it is claimed, "picture different epochs in the plan of spiritual creation—mark the dispensations and picture their meaning."¹ It is claimed that the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, and "the holy days" were ordained by God to be observed "forever," and that they were observed by Jesus and His apostles and the converted Gentile Christians. References given are: Acts 2:1; 12:3; 18:21; 20:6, 16; 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8; 11: 20-34.

It is asserted that "Church History shows that the early true Church did, *for more than four hundred years* at least—perhaps much longer—after Christ's resurrection, continue to keep and observe these annual *Holy* days given by God!"² We find in Radio Church of God literature no recognition of the fact that a transition took place from Jewish festival observances to Christian ordinances such as the Lord's Sup-

per, baptism, et cetera—not an overnight transition, but one lasting over a period of years. The earliest Christians were devout Hebrews who passed gradually, rather than abruptly, from Judaism to Christianity, so far as religious observances were concerned, a fact which explains why Paul and his companions spoke of Jewish feasts with respect and attended them for some time after becoming Christians.

In Acts 18:21 Paul says, "I must by all means keep this feast that cometh in Jerusalem: but—" This is one of the Radio Church of God proof texts for Christian observance of a Jewish feast. However, this phrase is omitted by almost all the translators, not being found in the original Greek. It is regarded as a textual insertion, probably suggested to some copyist by Acts 20:16, where it says that Paul planned to be at Jerusalem in time for "the Day of Pentecost." Paul clearly states in Colossians 2:16, 17 that the commandments concerning the observance of holy days, such as Passover, Pentecost, Day of Atonement, et cetera, and other regulations surrounding festivals, are "a shadow of things to come," and not matters on which men should condemn each other, because the Jewish system of ritual observances had come to an end.

The perpetuity of the feasts and festivals of Israel, in H. W. Armstrong's reasoning, appears to rest also on Exodus 12:14: "And ye shall keep it [the Passover] a feast to the Lord throughout your generations; ye shall keep it a feast by an ordinance forever."

The word "forever," from the Hebrew word *ólam*, may mean (1) perpetually, or (2) for as long as the typical festivals should retain their validity. When Christ, the Anti-type, died on the cross, the typical passed away. Sometimes the context in which the word *ólam* is used conveys the meaning of temporary, or for as long as something or someone exists; sometimes it may mean literally without end, as the following illustrations of the use of *ólam* respectively show:

Used to indicate a man's lifetime:

Psalm 119:44: "So shall I keep Thy law continually *forever and ever.*"

1 Samuel 1:22: "I will bring him [Samuel], that he may appear before the Lord, and there abide *forever.*"

Used to mean evermore:

2 Samuel 7:26: "Let Thy name [God's] be magnified *forever.*"

1 Chronicles 16:34: "O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; for His mercy endureth *forever.*"

There are many other uses of this word in both the senses given above. Thus, appeal to the use of this word affords no proof that the feasts of Israel were to be observed in perpetuity by the children of Israel, or by Christians, after the antitypical Christ had fulfilled the types of most of the ancient festivals. When the temple veil was rent in twain by an unseen hand at the time of Christ's death, the typical services were no longer valid.

Another factor was the termination of the Jewish economy. When the temple services ceased, so did the "perpetual" observances of feasts and festivals. As long as the Old Testament economy endured they were to be observed, but their literal observance would be impossible today in exactly the detail stipulated by the laws of Israel.

The chief festivals were:

1. Unleavened Bread. A seven-day festival connected with Passover. Leviticus 23:5-14.

2. Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost. A one-day festival. Leviticus 23:15-21; Exodus 34:22.

3. Tabernacles, or Ingathering, or Booths. A seven-day festival. Exodus 23:16; Leviticus 23:34-44; Deuteronomy 16:13.

(The above three were obligatory and all males were to observe them in Jerusalem.)

4. Trumpets. This was the civil date for the New Year, a one-day festival. Leviticus 23:24, 25.

5. Atonement. A one-day celebration of cleansing the sanctuary, signifying the judgment. Leviticus 23:27-32.

(Involved in the above five festivals were seven festival sabbaths in addition to the seventh-day Sabbath. Leviticus 23:38; Exodus 20:8-11.)

6. New Moons. These were, for practical purposes, monthly festivals. 2 Kings 4:23; Isaiah 1:13, 14.

7. Other festivals were added later, such as:

a. Purim. Esther 9:21, 22, 26.

b. Dedication. This was to honor the restoration and rededication of the temple after its desecration by Antiochus Epiphanes. It was observed in the time of Jesus. See John 10:22.

If any group attempted the literal observance of this formidable list of festivals today, the absence of animal sacrifice and the impossibility of the prescribed ritual, the irrelevance of much of the typology to a nonpastoral people, and the cessation of the typical Levitical priesthood would render the feasts and festivals meaningless. They would have to be changed and adapted beyond recognition. In fact, this changing has been done in Radio Church of God observances. If the observances were typical, what point is there in observing them after the antitype has appeared?

Paul, in Ephesians 2:15 and Colossians 2:13-17, makes clear that "the law of commandments contained in ordinances" and "the handwriting of ordinances" were taken away, nailed to the cross. The ceremonial law pertained to typical worship and corporate life in Israel. The moral law of Ten Commandments, however, was given quite separately and distinctly from the ceremonial law, and it pertains universally to all mankind in every age.

Details on how to observe Passover, Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, Trumpets, Day of Atonement, Tabernacles, et cetera, are given in Radio Church of God literature.³ Attendance at a tabernacle in Texas, or in London, England, is urged, and the practice of using the "second tithe" for the purpose of attending these gatherings is advocated. Such

gatherings are said to be "more enjoyable than the burdensome holidays which our modern society has incorporated from the rites of the ancient pagans by way of an apostate church."⁴

Some Points in Old Testament Typology

1. The Day of Atonement has, of course, special lessons for the church today, inasmuch as it dealt with the judgment of God's people; but observance of a festival is not involved in learning these spiritual lessons. Two goats are mentioned in Leviticus 16:8—"one lot for the Lord, and the other lot for the scapegoat." The first goat is admitted by all Christians to represent Christ because it was slain as a sacrifice for sin. Perhaps the majority have insisted that the second goat also represents Christ because the sins of the people were confessed over it before it was driven out to be forever lost in the wilderness.

The Radio Church of God teaches, rightly we think, that the second goat represents Satan.⁵ It represents placing the sins on their author where they belong, and the absolute removal of sin from the presence of God and His people. This goat, or Azazel, represents Satan, on whom the responsibility for sin is to be visited. But this transfer of the responsibility for sin, we believe, does not imply any part in man's salvation.

The antitypical services are seen in Hebrews, chapters 8 and 9. We do not observe anymore the typical Day of Atonement on earth because Christ, the great Antitype, "is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." Hebrews 9:24.

2. The Radio Church of God uses 1 Corinthians 5:7, 8 in an attempt to prove that we should "*KEEP THE FEAST*" of Unleavened Bread in its entirety.⁶ Paul here actually says:

"Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast,

not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth."

This is not a call to Christians to continue the old feasts, but rather to forsake the old way of life with its corruptions and passions and to seek renewal of heart in Christ Jesus. "Let us keep" implies that Christians should continually keep themselves free from the defilement of the old leaven of sin, and serve God "with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." This is a figure of speech obviously referring to the spiritual lessons for Christians from the Passover, as contrasted with the now ineffectual literalities of the ancient festival.

3. It is suggested by H. W. Armstrong that the glorious second advent may occur "on THIS VERY DAY of the Feast of Trumpets!" He warns that unless we are found observing this feast, we may not be ready to be caught up to meet the Lord at that time.⁷ While this is possible, it does seem farfetched to tie the greatest event in New Testament eschatology to the literal dates of an ancient festival.

At times even the Israelites discontinued observance of these festivals for long periods. Admittedly the spiritual life of the people suffered by this neglect, but the welfare and the destiny of the church today surely cannot depend on a literal date for an Old Testament festival observance under New Testament conditions.

4. It is claimed by the Radio Church of God that there must be seven ancient festivals because "seven is God's number of completeness."⁸ It is true, as used in this argument, that the Feast of Tabernacles was originally seven days; and the number seven appears in other connections with this meaning in mind. But overemphasis in the number "seven" is inadvisable. For instance, Tabernacles (also called Ingathering or Booths) had a day added to the original seven, and the eighth became "that great day of the feast" in the days of Jesus. See John 7:37; compare Leviticus 23:36. It was the culmination of the Feast of Tabernacles, accord-

ing to Edersheim and other authorities, and is not to be reckoned as another festival, as does the Radio Church of God, in order to keep the number of feasts a "complete number." There were other festival changes made by rabbinical law during the centuries, some very complicated and difficult to follow. Some references list seven, some eight festivals in Israel, according to what is included.

6. *What Happened to Enoch, Moses, and Elijah?*

Is Enoch in heaven or in the grave? Did the whirlwind take Elijah to some place on earth where he later died? Is Moses still in the grave?

The Radio Church of God accepts what is known as the doctrine of conditional immortality. In other words, man does not possess an inherently immortal soul.⁹ Many Christians besides Seventh-day Adventists and the Radio Church of God also share this view. But in this connection, the Radio Church of God also teaches, as we have shown elsewhere, that Jesus is the *only* human to have been "born again" by resurrection into the immortal state, and that He alone has ascended from earth to heaven. John 3:13. Therefore, the church teaches that neither Enoch nor Elijah, nor any other mortal, has been taken to heaven. This view ignores what happened at the death of Jesus: "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many." Matthew 27:52, 53. Many Bible students have regarded this, in conjunction with Ephesians 4:8 and Psalm 68:18, as evidence for the ascension of these resurrected ones with the Lord. But the Radio Church of God does not accept this understanding, because to them no heaven exists in the usual Christian sense, as a place where the saved are taken.

Herman L. Hoeh, one of the Radio Church of God writers, speaking of Elijah's ascension, states categorically: "Certainly the whirlwind used by God could not take him

beyond the earth's atmosphere. Neither does the Bible account leave Elijah in the air!"¹⁰ The argument suggests that the whirlwind transported the prophet through the "first heaven," or earth's atmosphere, to some remote place where he later died. It concludes with this statement: "Elijah is dead in the dust of the earth awaiting the resurrection of the just. Elijah, some years after being removed in the whirlwind, went into the grave, but will rise again to live forevermore!"¹¹

The Bible pictures Elijah and Elisha walking together toward the Jordan River a few miles from Mt. Nebo and Mt. Pisgah, in the general area where Moses died and was raised and taken to heaven (Jude 9). The sudden translation of Elijah is said (in 2 Kings 2:11) to have been "by a whirlwind into heaven" and the appearance is described as "a chariot of fire, and horses of fire." This description portrays no ordinary whirlwind—it was doubtless an angel host. The psalmist says, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels." Psalm 68:17.

The "sons of the prophets" had been warned that Elijah would be taken from Elisha. 2 Kings 2:5. But when Elisha returned alone, they were unconvinced of the translation, and suggested that he had been cast on a mountain or in a valley. They searched for Elijah in vain for three days, against Elisha's counsel. Obviously he believed in Elijah's translation to heaven; but the younger men, with Mr. Hoeh, believed that Elijah had been dropped on a mountain or in a valley.

On retracing his steps, Elisha was accosted by the children of Bethel with the taunt: "Go up, thou baldhead; go up, thou baldhead." This godless taunt reveals that the report of the translation of Elijah to heaven was already in circulation, and the immediate judgment on the unbelief of these youth has therefore some evidential value in the record of Elijah's translation to heaven.

Herman L. Hoeh maintains that "translated" does not mean transported to heaven, which he thinks would imply

immortality.¹² But is that necessarily so? Are we sure that the angels are immortal—which means “not subject to death”? If so, how could one third of them be “reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day”? Jude 6. This language in Jude obviously implies final extinction, which is not consistent with immortality. It does not necessarily follow that translation out of this earth must mean immortality.

“Into heaven” is made to mean some distant place on earth, because the Radio Church of God insists on a literal earthly whirlwind. But “heaven” has other meanings in addition to the atmospheric heavens, among which is the place where God dwells. Even though God cannot be localized, the Scriptures speak of heaven as His throne. Acts 7:49; Isaiah 66:1; Psalm 11:4. And our Lord does the same in Matthew 5:34; 23:22. These and many other similar references cannot be ignored as teaching that there is an extraterrestrial place where God and the angels are, even allowing for some metaphor in the uses of the word “heaven.”

Mr. Hoeh asserts that 2 Chronicles 21:12-15 proves that a letter written to the wicked King Jehoram by Elijah “was written *about ten years after Elijah had been taken to another location by the whirlwind.*”¹³

The phrase, “a writing to him from Elijah” is the only reference to Elijah in the book of Chronicles. Elijah was a prophet of Israel, the northern kingdom, and the narrative in Chronicles deals primarily with the history of Judah, so Elijah is mentioned only incidentally. The translation record is in 2 Kings 2, but Jehoram’s reign does not appear until chapter 8; so evidently the records are not in chronological order. The phrase in the prophet’s reprimand, “Thou hast not walked in the ways of Jehoshaphat,” indicates that this personal rebuke was given to the king *before* the prophet’s ascension.

In regard to Moses we read in Jude 9: “Yet Michael the Archangel, when contending with the devil He dis-

puted about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee."

The Radio Church of God perhaps will not admit that this affords any evidence that Moses, who died and was buried in Moab (Deuteronomy 34:5, 6), was resurrected from the dead, or that Moses and Elijah personally appeared on the mount of transfiguration with the Lord. The New Testament transfiguration is called a "*vision*."¹⁴ But this trance idea is hardly substantiated by the fact that the disciples saw these things after they had awakened from sleep: "And when they were awake, they saw His glory, and the two men that stood with Him." Luke 9:32.

In the case of Enoch, it is recorded in Holy Writ: "And Enoch walked with God: and he was not; for God took him." Genesis 5:24. "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him." Hebrews 11:5.

"That he should not see death" in Hebrews 11:5 is said by the Radio Church of God to refer to the *second* death of Revelation 20:5, and it is argued that "should not see" is in a conditional tense and therefore refers to a future event. But it should be clear to any student of the Word that none of these heroes of faith are to die the second death, and therefore the author of Hebrews says here that Enoch was translated "that he should not see" the first death. With this viewpoint Bible translators agree, as can be seen from the following renderings: "By faith Enoch was carried away to another life without passing through death." NEB. "By faith Enoch was translated—not to see death, and was not found, because God did translate him." Young's Literal. "It was because of his faith that Enoch was promoted to the eternal world without experiencing death." Phillips. "It was because of his faith that Enoch was taken up and did not have to experience death." Jerusalem Bible.

Now a word in explanation of John 3:13, quoted by the Radio Church of God in support of its position. Jesus said, "No man hath ascended up to heaven, but He that

came down from heaven, even the Son of man which is in heaven."

This text does not refer to the postresurrection Christ, but to the One who came down from heaven—the Son of man. He was the Teacher of heavenly things. This Son of man conversing here with Nicodemus proceeded to reveal Himself as "He that came down from heaven" to tell men of "heavenly things."

Nicodemus was no doubt aware of a Jewish tradition (based on an old idea that Moses was actually taken from the mount into heaven for a view of the sanctuary and for instruction) that the prophets were taken to heaven for instruction, then brought back to earth to teach mankind. Thus Nicodemus could say: "We know that Thou art a teacher come from God." Jesus, however, corrected a misconception when He said: "No man hath ascended up to heaven."

This text simply teaches that no man had ever gone to heaven and returned to "tell you of heavenly things," and that Jesus only had been in heaven. He alone could say: "We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen; and ye receive not our witness." John 3:11.

REFERENCES

1. H. W. Armstrong, "Pagan Holidays—Or God's Holydays—Which?" page 5.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 4.
3. See Herman L. Hoeh, "How to Observe the Festivals" (from *Good News*, January, 1959).
4. *Ibid.*, p. 2.
5. Armstrong, *op. cit.*, pages 20-22.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 12, 13.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 18, 19.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 26.
9. See Garner Ted Armstrong, "Do You Have an Immortal Soul?"
10. Herman L. Hoeh, "Where Are Enoch and Elijah?" page 12.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 14.
12. *Ibid.*, p. 5.
13. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
14. *Ibid.*, p. 14.

12.

Miscellaneous Teachings

In Brief Question and Answer Form

1. Does the Radio Church of God believe in the restoration of the temple in Jerusalem?

A. Yes. *The Plain Truth*, July, 1967, declares that the Zechariah, chapters 12 to 14, "prophecies for the latter days—our time now—require the Jews to be in Jerusalem. Furthermore, Daniel shows that sacrifices to God in His Temple will be *restored* just before the final world war culminates in the Return of Christ." This means "the Temple will have to be built in Jerusalem's Old City."¹

2. How does Germany figure in prophecy as interpreted by the Radio Church of God?

A. Germany, it says, will appear in Palestine and this "will lead to a final nuclear holocaust—WORLD WAR III. But before that terrifying catastrophe occurs, the Arabs will have *at least a chance* at *jihad* (Holy War)." They will thus "bring on themselves swift defeat at the hands of Neo-Nazi Germany."²

3. Does the Radio Church of God teach that all other religious bodies have rejected Jesus Christ?

A. Yes. Here is one of many statements to this effect: "There is **ONLY ONE WORK** that is preaching the true Gospel. . . . **THIS IS THAT WORK**. Every other work *rejects* the message of Jesus Christ—*rejects* His **RULE** through His **LAWS**. There is no exception!"³

4. Has anyone ever accepted the numerous challenges of the Radio Church of God to prove them wrong?

A. If you mean in public debate, we do not know. In any case, debates do not accomplish much. If you mean in writing, the answer is, "Yes, many times." But of course, such challenges and answers are never successful in changing the opinions of the two principals. Two of the published answers to the Radio Church of God are the following:

The Kingdom of the Cults, by Walter R. Martin, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, Michigan. A 450-page volume dealing with the major cults.

The Wednesday Crucifixion Theory, by R. L. Odom, a 24-page pamphlet by the Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C.

5. What value is there in these recurring challenges by the Radio Church of God to disprove what they teach?

A. None. But they sound impressive to the challenger's followers. Many minority groups and people with unusual ideas challenge others to disprove their assertions. They commonly claim that if their ideas cannot be disproved, they must be true. They do not seem to realize that some things are not capable of disproof from the Bible if the Bible never mentions them! The burden of proof rests on the man who states his views, and if his "proofs" do not convince, then he has lost his argument.

6. What is the value of the nineteen-year cycle, claimed by Herbert W. Armstrong to have providential significance in his work?

A. H. W. Armstrong teaches that the words "I have set before thee an open door" (Revelation 3:8) identifies the radio and printing work of the Radio Church of God, which, he claims, now uses more kilowatts of power on its radio program than any other secular or religious organization. The "door" of 2 Corinthians 2:12, 13 (where Paul's coming to Troas is compared to an open door) leads to the comment that Paul preached for nineteen years in his own

land of Asia Minor, and then he went to Europe. Similarly, Mr. Armstrong preached for nineteen years to the United States beginning in 1934, and exactly nineteen years later—in 1953—“a door was opened” for him to preach to all the world. Since the Bible teaches “dualities,” the similarities in the above nineteen-year cycles have, it is claimed, a remarkable divine significance.⁴

Mr. Armstrong asserts that the significance of the nineteen-year cycles in his work is based on astronomical facts, of which the nineteen-year lunisolar cycle is selected to show how God often works. Christ began teaching the disciples in A.D. 27, and one hundred time cycles later, in 1927, God began to teach H. W. Armstrong. The original disciples, it is said, were ordained to the ministry in June, A.D. 31, and Mr. Armstrong was ordained one hundred time cycles later, in June, 1931.

This nineteen-year cycle is based on the Metonic cycle, devised by the Athenian astronomer Meton in the fifth century B.C. He observed that 235 lunar months correspond with nineteen solar years, and he was “very nearly correct,” according to *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church*, page 570. “The relation between integral numbers of months and years expressed by Meton’s rule deviated only two hours from the truth.”—*Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th ed., Vol. 18, p. 299.

Astronomers have recognized the slight error in Meton’s calculations, and various compensating devices have been included in Greek, Roman, and Jewish calendars. Meton’s error of making the solar year slightly too long was corrected by Calippus of Cyzicus.

Incidentally, the Metonic cycle is the basis of the Christian church’s “Golden Number,” by which its festivals are calculated. Some of these festivals are of pagan origin and are therefore condemned by the Radio Church of God. The Christian church has as much justification for the use of the nineteen-year cycle as has Mr. Armstrong for claiming divine significance for the nineteen-year cycle in his

own experience and work. To most people, in neither case is divine significance involved. The significance of numbers, both Biblical and astronomical, has been much overstressed by well-meaning people. We all might find coincidences based on this sort of thing, even the nineteen-year cycle, in our lives if we were determined to find them.

7. Is it true that "*some 90% of all the prophecies in the Bible*" began to be fulfilled one Sunday in 1934 when Mr. H. W. Armstrong launched his radio broadcasts, and that there is "ONLY ONE WORK" preaching the "true Gospel"?⁵

A. That is his claim. He also believes that all the preachers since apostolic times have presented satanic counterfeits of the gospel until he came on the scene.

The Radio Church of God finds a place in prophecy for almost everything in the news. The end of the world is tied to global nuclear warfare. Outer space travel is seen in Deuteronomy 30:4 ("If any of thine be driven out into the outmost parts of heaven"). Its teaching relates the Turks (descendants of Esau) to Americans, Britons, and a few northern European nations through Abraham and Isaac.⁶ Queen Elizabeth's visit to Germany is said to fulfill prophecy.⁷ Isaiah 10:5-26, it is claimed, reveals that Assyria (Germany) will be God's rod of punishment upon the hypocritical people of Israel—primarily the English-speaking world—and then will itself be humbled.⁸ Almost everything finds a place in the web of prophecy in Radio Church of God literature. There is much common ground on prophecy among Christians, despite some differences, but prophecy can become near magic when it is used in this way.

8. Why does the Radio Church of God teach that punishment is to come to Britain and America? How is escape from these calamities recommended?

A. The Radio Church of God asserts that the United States, Britain, and certain other descendants of ancient Israel, as they identify them, will be in captivity just before Christ comes, because they have robbed God of tithes and offerings. To prove this, Malachi 3:10 is quoted, and Mr.

Armstrong says that for this sin God will send famine and will raise up enemies who will "remove us from our land." Ezekiel 5:5, 12. The English-speaking world, it is said, owes God rent, and will therefore be removed from their lands. Two thirds of modern "Israel" are to die of famine, pestilence, and war, and finally only a tenth will survive. Ezekiel 5:1-4, 12. After this there will be a second "exodus" in which the scattered descendants of Israel (British and Americans) will be restored to Palestine, and this restoration is said to be so vast that it will dwarf the first exodus of the Old Testament.

These calamities YOU personally can escape, says the Radio Church of God, if you will begin to pay tithe and believe God's promises. It is also said that to pay tithe to any other than the Radio Church of God is worse than not giving at all.⁹

9. How do Russia and China come into the Radio Church of God prophetic picture?

A. Russia, it is asserted, will be the greatest of "the kings of the east" (Revelation 16:12), and she will attack the wealthy nation established by Christ in Palestine (Ezekiel 38:11) with Oriental and African allies (Ezekiel 38:1-6).

It is said, on the basis of Ezekiel 38 and 39, that "ATHEISTIC, GODLESS RUSSIA AND CHINA" will have the boldness to come against Palestine, in which Christ's world capital will then be located. "*Gog and Magog* [Ezekiel 38:2] *come 'OUT OF THE NORTH PARTS'* (Verse 15)—*where Russia, Mongolia and China are today.*" McClintock and Strong's article on *Magog* is then quoted in this context: "'From the accounts found among the Arabians, Persians and Syrians," we learn that these three nations used the names '*Yajuj* and *Majuj*' (note the similarity in the names *Majuj* and *Magog*) to refer to 'all less known barbarous people of the Northwest and Northeast of Asia'—WHERE RUSSIA AND CHINESE MONGOLIA ARE TODAY!"

China is said to join atheistic Russia in attacking Palestine after Christ has begun to establish His model nation

there, but they will not conquer it. What God will do to them is said to be foretold in Ezekiel 38:18-22; 39:1-20. "This will be the LAST GREAT REBELLION for 1000 years. (One more will occur 1000 years later. Rev. 20: 7-9.)" ¹⁰

10. Does the Radio Church of God have anything to say on "the mark of the beast"?

A. In one place the Radio Church of God says that the mark of the beast is the mark of the Roman Empire, forced upon the people of the world by the Roman Church.¹¹ In another place this statement is made: "And we *know* what Satan will do. He will enforce, by military *might*, the branding of the people of the world with *Sunday* observance—the '*mark of the beast!*'" ¹²

"Christ will not come to take vengeance on this great false Church," it is said, "UNTIL *another* great martyrdom has taken place." This is called "THE GREAT TRIBULATION" of Matthew 24:9, 21, 22. This is "the wrath of Satan (Rev. 12:12), inflicted at the behest of HIS apostate church *by* the coming 'United Nations of EUROPE' and against the true people of GOD!" ¹³

11. Does Mr. Armstrong claim to be a prophet?

A. We have not seen such a claim in just those words. But he apparently thinks of his work in this way, for in introducing his 226-page book, *The United States and the British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, he says that this book may "prove to be the most significant book of this century." Then, evidently very serious about his work, he adds in closing the book: "By God's direction and authority, I have laid the TRUTH before you!" ¹⁴

12. Does the Radio Church of God say anything about the three angels' messages of Revelation 14?

A. Yes. It says there are to be three angels with messages of final warning to the apostate nations, which are controlled by a great deceiving church.

13. Is it true that the Radio Church of God teaches that we are not "saved" by the death of Christ?

A. H. W. Armstrong says that if Christ had not risen from the dead, we should not have been saved by His death (1 Corinthians 15:14-18), and therefore He did not die to save sinners. Death has no power to beget life, as this would be contrary to the "Law of Biogenesis." The truth, he says, is that at conversion we are justified by His death, and thus have access to God because guilt is removed. Thereafter we are "*saved* BY HIS LIFE," and at the resurrection we are born again to eternal life.¹⁵

14. Does the Radio Church of God have anything to say about rewards?

A. In discussing what Jesus meant by "in My Father's house are many mansions," the Father's house is identified as the Holy City (Revelation 21:2), which will come down to earth with already-prepared official mansions, and it will become God's permanent residence. Revelation 21:3; 22:3. The "mansions" are said to mean "rooms" representing office or rank. The "place" Jesus is preparing is said to mean "*position, office, rank*, as well as geographical location." Our reward, then, in God's government will depend upon the office we hold—which in turn depends on how well we have done with what we have been given, and how much we have grown spiritually in this life.¹⁶

15. Where did the original Twelve Apostles go after New Testament times?

A. No one really knows, but tradition has it that they went abroad preaching the gospel "to all the world." Thomas is said to have reached India, for example. Peter is supposed to have been crucified in Rome, et cetera.

The Radio Church of God says that after Acts 15:29, we read no more of the Twelve, except for Peter's trip to Babylon, because they all went "'to the LOST sheep of the HOUSE OF ISRAEL.' (Mat. 10:5-6.)" They went, Mr. Armstrong says, after the "LOST Ten Tribes."¹⁷

16. In view of the racial aspects of Mormon and of British-American-Israel views, how does the race question appear in Radio Church of God teachings?

A. There is listed a Radio Church of God pamphlet entitled "What About Race?" but application for a copy brought the reply that it was out of print.

17. Does the Radio Church of God have anything to say on the great tribulation?

A. Yes. "This coming Great Tribulation is *not* the Wrath of God upon the world's wicked—it is the wrath of Satan the devil upon the Christians, and upon the democratic nations (Rev. 12:12-13). Millions of repenting SAINTS will be IN it, and the very objects of it—because it is for *their* sake that God will intervene to CUT SHORT that hellish time of torture (Mat. 24:22)."¹⁸

18. Is a World War III predicted by the Radio Church of God?

A. Yes. "The Red Armies of Russia, China, and allies will number TWO HUNDRED MILLION! . . .

"These vast hordes will then sweep across Europe, UTTERLY DESTROYING ALL THIS RESURRECTED ROMAN EMPIRE! It is spoken of prophetically as the modern 'BABYLON'—the *daughter* of the ancient Babylon of Nebuchadnezzar. It is a 'BABYLON' led by the symbolic harlot 'woman'—the great apostate paganized Church falsely calling herself 'Christian.' . . .

"Meanwhile, the FUEHRER, or whatever the Leader shall be called (prophecy symbolizes him under the name 'THE BEAST'), together with the 'False Prophet'—religious Leader associated with the military Leader—will have moved their capital to the environs of JERUSALEM, which they will have captured at the outset of World War III—the beginning of the Tribulation. They will, by the time of the Russian invasion, have large military forces in Palestine, as well as on other fronts of the world war.

"Communists, incidentally, shall not take over Palestine, nor other southwestern Asiatic territory. Just now they are bidding strongly for it. But it will fall, instead, into the hands of the resurrected Roman forces."

At this point Christ is said to come in glory, and simul-

taneously the seven last plagues are poured out, and the "Great DAY OF THE LORD comes to its fateful end, with the armies assembled at ARMAGEDDON destroyed."¹⁹

19. What about the gift of tongues in Radio Church of God teachings?

A. They do not accept the usual Pentecostal idea that the baptism of the Holy Spirit is evidenced by an ecstatic gift of speaking in tongues. The tremendous manifestation of the Day of Pentecost, they state, was "an EXPERIENCE unique in all history. It was the welcoming manifestation of the advent of the Holy Spirit—the 'other Comforter'—to earth FROM HEAVEN."

"Are they [the Spirit manifestations] not available for us today?" Mr. Armstrong asks. His answer: "No, they surely are not! . . . That will NEVER be repeated again! *It never occurred before, and it never will again!*"²⁰

"Tarry" meetings, repetitious chanting, waiting and "praying down" the Spirit are regarded as dangerous, and emphasis is rather on obedience, teaching of the Word, love, faith, et cetera.

20. Are Radio Church of God assemblies open to the public?

A. In general Radio Church of God meetings are not open to everyone.

21. Is the Communion service observed by the Radio Church of God? Is fermented wine used?

A. It is said that the Passover is improperly called "Lord's Supper" in 1 Corinthians 11:20; so the former term is used. Leaven must be removed from the premises, but it may be given to friends or neighbors. Fermented wine is used. On the basis of Matthew 11:19 and John 2:1-11 it is claimed that Jesus taught moderation, not total abstinence.

Social events are held regularly, and drinking and dancing are not forbidden.

22. Would you say that the main emphasis in Radio Church of God teachings is obedience to law, or victory in the Lord Jesus Christ?

A. This is a question which has been stressed by a number of persons who have left the Radio Church of God. They say that they were set on obedience, doing something—like paying tithe, or keeping the Sabbath, the feasts, et cetera—but that they lacked a consciousness of the peace of Christ in the life and victory of redeeming grace from day to day.

We have gone through about thirty-six copies of *The Plain Truth*, noting the letters under "What Our Readers Say," and we have not found any that speak of the victorious experience through Christ's grace. There may be some that we have not seen, but the main emphasis surely seems to be on blessings received from tithe paying or keeping the law, or a consciousness of knowledge or enlightenment beyond the blindness of those around them. None seems to emphasize a deeper love for Christ as our Saviour. Unquestionably there is sincerity, but the ringing call, "I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day" (2 Timothy 1:12) seems to be muted or absent.

Paul's existential witness, "I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation" (Romans 1:16) is, of course, the fruit of a surrendered, grace-filled life NOW, which is thus enabled to obey God in all things required in His Word.

REFERENCES

1. *The Plain Truth*, July, 1967, page 6.
2. *Ibid.*
3. *Ibid.*, July, 1965, page 30.
4. Herman L. Hoeh, "A True History of the True Church," page 27.
5. *The Plain Truth*, January, 1959, page 3; *Ibid.*, July, 1965, page 30.
6. *The Plain Truth*, July, 1966, page 4.
7. *Ibid.*, June, 1965.
8. *Ibid.*, June, 1966, page 4.
9. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 7, pages 12-14; H. W. Armstrong, "1975 in Prophecy," pages 12-14.
10. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 3, pages 12, 13.
11. H. W. Armstrong, "The Mark of the Beast," page 4.

12. *Bible Correspondence Course*, Lesson 20, page 9.
13. H. W. Armstrong, "The Mark of the Beast," pages 4, 5.
14. H. W. Armstrong, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, page 212.
15. H. W. Armstrong, "What Is the Purpose of the Resurrection?"
16. Herman L. Hoeh, "What Is the Place that Jesus Is Preparing?"
17. H. W. Armstrong, *The United States and British Commonwealth in Prophecy*, page 149.
18. H. W. Armstrong, "1975 in Prophecy," page 22.
19. *Ibid.*, pp. 25-28.
20. H. W. Armstrong, "The Tongues Question," page 5.

Has
as
the content
of this book
stimulated
your thinking?

Send us your name and address. SOON you will receive through the mail, and *without charge*, a BIBLE STUDY GUIDELINE that will respond to your secret and expressed longings!

We promise that you will find this guideline richly rewarding in your continued reading.

For this free, friendly service, write to the
Pacific Press Publishing Association
1350 Villa Street
Mountain View, California 94040